

## Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God C2025

Let me start this homily with the words God addressed to Abraham in **Genesis 22: 17a-18**, *"I will bless you abundantly (...) and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing - all this because you obeyed my command."*

On this first day of the year, these words shed light on the heritage that is ours because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We are the people - bearers of a promise of blessing from our God. It is God's will and deep intention that we might be blessed with all types of blessings that can enhance our life and assure us of his protection.

That is how our priests intercede and bless us in invoking God's favor and protection upon us, acting thus as a channel through which God bestows his blessing of peace, health, and guidance on his people being blessed.

As attested by the first reading of today, God gives the manner through which the blessing has to be bestowed: *"This is how you shall bless the Israelites. (...) They shall invoke my name upon (them), and I will bless them"*. It is legitimate, then, to enter the New Year with trust, confidence and hope that whatever might be the twists of our life, whatever might be its ups and downs, God will bless us according to his promise. *"And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us"* (Romans 5: 5)

That promise and the will of God to bless us are eternal and perpetual in human history. They relate to all the generations, to all the epochs, to all the spaces and to all the times. As it was in the past, so it is today and will be in the future. When in our life and our undertakings we feel blessed, it is part of the fulfillment of God's promise to us.

Though it is God's intention to bless us, we are, however, surrounded by a deep mystery. We do not know what can happen to us tomorrow or after tomorrow. God alone knows what lies before us and what can happen to us in the course of the New Year we start today. Of course, we expect God to bless us, but we do not know the type of blessing he will give us. We do not know in which particular circumstances of life we will receive his favor. We do not even know the extent of the blessing he will bestow upon us.

Given such a truth, it becomes clear that all our good wishes, all our desires and dreams are fragile, because we do not know how tomorrow will be. This point is very important at the beginning of this New Year. For sure, we enter the New Year with expectations and hopes, but their outcome is unknown. That is why on the list of our wishes for this year, we need to leave a window open to the unknown, just in case things do not turn out to be as we thought they should be.

There is wisdom in doing so, for according to the Psalm 127, *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep vigil"* (Psalm 127: 1-2). We leave everything open to the will of God and his benevolence. The popular wisdom is right when it says, *"Man proposes and God disposes."*

Because our dreams and wishes are fragile, we want to invoke the support, the protection and the accompaniment of Mary throughout this year. She is the mother of Jesus, our savior; she is also our mother. We all know the role a mother plays in the life of someone. What would our life be without these great ladies who took care of us and opened us to the reality of the world? Our relationships with our mothers might have changed over the years, but without them we would not have been who we are today.

Someone might not have known his or her dad, but the psychological effect is not the same with that of not having a Mum. Human experience has shown that mothers are so special that orphans of mothers miss a lot of tenderness and gentleness that come from them.

A mother by virtue is someone who cares and protects her children. Mary has just done that with Jesus like any mother would do. By consecrating the New Year to Mary, the Church invites us to re-discover the role of Mary in God's plan and in the life of Jesus. Mary is the mother of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. She is the mother of the disciples and she is the mother of the Church. The Church wants also that we re-discover the role Mary can play in our own lives.

As disciples of Jesus, we put ourselves under her umbrella so that she protects us. All this fits God's plan, because it was God who made Mary the mother of Jesus and our mother. As St Paul says in today's second reading, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom us so that we might receive adoption and become God's sons and daughters.

The portrait of Mary we have in today's Gospel is full of praise. Luke says that once she heard all that the shepherds said about her son, she kept all that in her heart, reflecting upon it. Mary is an example of praying people who take advantage of any event happening in their life in order to see in it the will of God. Such people offer easily in prayer the important moments of their life to God, whether they are joyful or sorrowful.

Let us prepare ourselves to do exactly that as we start this New Year, full of the unknown about our future and our life. Let us walk in the footsteps of Mary, our mother, so that anything that will happen to us, we may meditate it in our hearts, with the desire to discover in it the will of God. Let us ask Mary to protect us, as she did Jesus. May her son, Jesus, be with us and bless us, as we enter the New Year! Happy New Year to everyone!

**Numbers 6: 22-27; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2: 16-21**



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