

NEW YEAR'S DAY 2023
Numbers 6.22-27///Galatians 4.4-7///Luke 2.16-21

→just one week ago we celebrated the great feast of Christmas---the birth of our savior Jesus

→today, we begin a New Year...another milestone in the history of the world...a milestone for each one of us and for our Church

→...our gospel reading tells us:

"when the eight days were completed...he was named Jesus...the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb"

→in Hebrew the name Jesus means...**God saves!**...and so today announces for the first time that Jesus was to be the savior to all people

→in a sense, the "naming day" of Jesus marked a new beginning for Mary.....as a whole new life opened before her.

→even though Mary could not have possibly understood everything that lay ahead...for herself, and her child

→they started a new path that day //// a new hope...a new confidence

→today, on this the first day of a New Year...many of us also begin a new path, a new hope...a new confidence...

→today, many of us make New Year's resolutions....they are made out a new sense of hope and confidence

→because with the beginning of the New Year we see an opportunity to begin again...

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→One of the opportunities of this day...is that it gives us chance to do some self-reflection...

→to perhaps look at the “best and the worst” of last year...in an effort to make some changes...

→our tendency to single out the “best” can be a good thing because it gives us something to emulate throughout the year....

→this is one of the reasons why the church singles out Mary and celebrates the New Year in honor of her because you might say....

→she is “**the best**” because of her unique role in salvation history.

→I’ve often thought about a “best and worst list” for Christians and what it would look like...

→a list that would help us throughout the year so that we might be the best we can be

→I came up with the following “best and worst list” of our Christian faith....

I would say....the biggest handicap we can face ---would be "fear"

the most beautiful day of the year would always be---today

the easiest thing to do this year ----would be to give up

the biggest mistake we could make this year ----would be to quit

the best gift to receive---is our faith

the greatest need for all of us---is good common sense

the worst sentiment we could have ---would be jealousy

and the best present we could give one another---is forgiveness.

the greatest friend we could ever have is God

[and] the most beautiful thing in the world we can share ---is our love

→It's a small list of the **"best and worst"** of a Christian life.....and something to think about as we begin this New Year together

→because the start of a new year reminds us that no matter what our mistakes....no matter what our sins....no matter what we have done ...we can always begin again

and to me, being able to make a new start is one of God's greatest gifts....

→one of the key themes of Pope Francis's preaching.....is to bring an awareness to all people about the understanding of God's mercy

→that's God's forgiveness and mercy is a gift that is constantly being bestowed upon you and me...

→and today.....we have been given another New Year...

another opportunity to change our ways

a chance to rid ourselves of anything that hinders us from seeing the face of God

and to rid ourselves of anything that prevents the mercy of God from coming into our lives

---how blessed we are.....*PAUSE*

and so as we gather in this Church this day...to celebrate the first Mass of 2023 we are here starting new....with an opportunity to look towards the future with hope, confidence and joy

→we are here....to pray to Jesus who saves us....to once again be reminded of the words of eternal life

PAUSE

→the message revealed in a stable in Bethlehem 2023 years ago is the same message given to us
this day as we begin this New Year

and that message....is that our God is good

....a savior has been given to us

and God's mercy and forgiveness in once again ours to have

→...we have been blessed once again with another chance for a new start!!!!

→May 2023 be the best for you, for your family and for our parish.....

may this year be filled with God's blessings

God's peace and God's mercy

And may we embrace His mercy, share His blessings, and bring His peace to one another
throughout this coming New Year.....