

We are Blessed to be a Blessing (Fr. Manoj Xalxo, OFM)

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26)

The first day of the New Year in the Catholic Church begins with this solemn blessing of the Lord. Three times the name of the Lord is pronounced, as if to stress that everything that is good comes from him. The whole blessing could be summed up in the following words “May you always be the true friend of the Lord, a son or daughter to him.”

Jesus is not only God’s gift to us but the bearer of innumerable gifts; He has made us children of his Father. He gave us his own mother to be our mother. So, as we begin the New Year, the Catholic Church reminds us that Jesus has not left us orphans; we have the Mother of God to journey and accompany us throughout our life. On the first day of the New Year, the Catholic Church honors her with the title Mary, the Holy Mother of God. On this day we celebrate the motherhood of Mary. We honor her for love, faith, obedience and sacrifice of her son for us all.

The New Year may unfold many blessings and as well as challenges. No one truly knows what is awaiting in his or her life. When Blessed Virgin Mary said Yes to becoming the Mother of God, she did not know entirely what was awaiting but she kept her faith and trust in God. She treasured everything and pondered them in her heart. We too are called to do the same. Whether blessings or challenges, take them first to God in prayer. Let us look up to Blessed Virgin Mary for example of faith and guidance in our life. Let us grow stronger in our relationship with God who only can give us peace and take us through all troubled waters. We have all been blessed by God in various ways, with gratitude in our heart acknowledge them and, in this year, and life ahead, resolve to be a blessing to the other in small ways. Through this, we can truly bear witness to being called a true child of God our Father.