OUR GREATEST GIFT

The First Reading for this New Year’s Mass proclaims the blessing given to Israel by Moses. God had instructed Moses to bestow the blessing on Israel, on behalf of Yahweh, promising them blessings of security, mercy, guidance, and loving kindness. Saint Paul, writing to the Galatians, points out that the Savior was born at a time especially chosen by God. In the New Testament, God bestows his blessings on his people not only by mere words but through his Word-made-Flesh: “God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it.” Mary was the woman referred to by Paul and it was through Mary that the Son of God entered the realm of humanity. Jesus was the Word-made-Flesh, the greatest blessing given by the Father to humankind. The world received its greatest blessing—the Savior—through the faithfulness of Mary. Before Mary conceived Jesus in her womb, she had first conceived Jesus in her heart when she accepted God’s offer to become the Mother of the Redeemer. Mary put her entire life in the hands of God. She did not receive special privileges from heaven. She continued living a simple life, and even faced great trials, but never wavered in her faith and trust in God. She probably became the talk of the town and object of derision by judgmental neighbors but she chose to remain steadfast and strong in her faith in God.

“Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.” Mary tried to make sense of the message of the angel to her. She was filled with awe as she felt the stirring of a new life in her womb. She was surprised by the shepherds, her first visitors, and by the amazing things they told her: a great vision of an angel telling them where to go, the heavenly host cheering the descent of God and calling on these lowly witnesses to see for themselves. Mary reflected on the recent turn of events, seeking enlightenment but never losing trust in God’s will and in his plans for her.

Mary gave birth to a child under the Law. On the eighth day after giving birth, Mary was required to present her child for circumcision and to give him a name. She had to fulfill the dictates of the Law so that her child will belong to the chosen people of Israel. According to St. Paul, such Law actually had no power to bring salvation to Israel and to humanity. It was precisely out of this necessity that the Savior had to be born to save those who lived under the Law. It was by humbling himself like a slave that the Messiah could set mankind free and thus we might receive our status as adopted children of God. Jesus gives us his Spirit so that through him we can call God “Abba! My Father!” We are no longer considered slaves, but his children. This became possible because the Son of God was born to Mary and he lived in our midst.

The mother is the first companion of every child as a baby is born to this world. At the onset of 2020, it is still our Mother—Mary—who is our first companion in our new journey. May we learn from Mary how to ponder God’s words while keeping faith that the New Year will bring great things for us: after all, our Mother is bringing us closer to Jesus each day!

Fr. Paul Marquez, SSP
**The Introductory Rites**

**Entrance Antiphon**
(Recited when there is no opening song)

_Hail, Holy Mother, who gave birth to the King who rules heaven and earth for ever._

**Greeting**
(The sign of the cross is made here)

_P — Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ._

_All — And with your spirit._

**Introduction**
(The priest may address the assembly with these or other similar words)

_P — A happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year to all of you! The year opens with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Under her maternal care, she gathers us, her children in Jesus Christ. Let us entrust to her our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows._

_Today we also celebrate World Day of Prayer for Peace. May the Savior of the world who brings God’s peace to his people bless all humanity with the gift of peace._

**Penitential Act**

_P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries._

_(Pause)_

_P — You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy._

_All — Lord, have mercy._

_P — You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy._

_All — Christ, have mercy._

_P — You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy._

_All — Lord, have mercy._

_P — May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life._

_All — Amen._

**Gloria**

_All — Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen._

**Collect**

_P — Let us pray._

_(Pause)_

_O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son._

_Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever._

_All — Amen._

**The Liturgy of the Word**

**First Reading** [Nm 6:22-27] (Sit)

_This beautiful prayer was used in the past when the priests blessed the people. On New Year’s Day, we invoke God’s name upon ourselves for the year ahead._

**A reading from the book of Numbers**

_The Lord said to Moses: “Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them: ‘The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace! So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.’”_

_— The word of the Lord._

_All — Thanks be to God._

**Responsorial Psalm** (Ps 67)

_R — May God bless us in his mercy._

**Second Reading** [Gal 4:4-7]

_When the fullness of time had come, the Son of God became man, born of a woman. Mary, from whom Jesus took his humanity, is the glory of our human race._

_A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians_ BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

_When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir, through God._

_— The word of the Lord._

_All — Thanks be to God._

**Alleluia** [Heb 1:1-2] (Stand)

_All — Alleluia, alleluia. In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son. Alleluia, alleluia._
Gospel [Lk 2:16-21]

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

THE SHEPHERDS went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow)

and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us pray to the Father, through the intercession of Mary, that we may incarnate the Gospel values in our lives. We pray:

R — Lord of peace, hear us.
C — That people of good will may live in peace which the heavenly host proclaimed at your Son’s birth. We pray: (R)
C — That warring nations and groups may be reconciled so that all people may live in tranquility and harmony. We pray: (R)
C — That those who work for justice and peace and for the defense of human dignity may experience the beatitude that belongs to peacemakers. We pray: (R)
C — That the broken in spirit, mind, or body because of acts of terrorism, fanaticism, and hatred may be healed and comforted. We pray: (R)
C — That our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary may not be mere lip service but be our inspiration to be like her who is faithful, humble, and loving. We pray: (R)
C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause), we pray: (R)

P — Heavenly Father, we thank you for a new year. Hear the prayer of your people and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, guide us toward lasting peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — O God, who in your kindness begin all good things and bring them to fulfillment, grant to us, who find joy in the Solemnity of the holy Mother of God, that, just as we glory in the beginnings of your grace, so one day we may rejoice in its completion.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, and to praise, bless, and glorify your name on the Solemnity of the Motherhood of the Blessed ever-Virgin Mary.

For by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit she conceived your Only Begotten Son, and without losing the glory of virginity brought forth into the world the eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty, Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you. Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim worship together with exultation. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in humble praise, as we acclaim:
All — Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth
are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invocation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Heb 13:8)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)
   We have received this heavenly Sacrament with joy, O Lord: grant, we pray, that it may lead us to eternal life, for we rejoice to proclaim the blessed ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of your Son and the Mother of the Church.
   Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)
   May God, the source and origin of all blessing, grant you grace, pour out his blessing in abundance, and keep you safe from harm throughout the year.
All — Amen.

P — May he give you integrity in faith, endurance in hope, and perseverance in charity with holy patience to the end.
All — Amen.

P — May he order your days and your deeds in his peace, grant your prayers in this and in every place, and lead you happily to eternal life.
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
All — Thanks be to God.

Happy New Year to All!
— Sambuhay Staff