New Year’s Day 2021

MDP of God

Happy New Year everyone

There’s several things I want to reflect on with you as we come to the end of 2020 and begin this year of our Lord—2021

In our 2nd reading today St Paul said that—“in the fullness of time”—God sent His Son---what does that mean? The fullness of time

St Paul is telling us that Jesus is the focal point of all of history---*and that’s why our calendar is focused on Him*

Most of the world counts the years based on the life of Jesus---traditionally we have spoken of “BC”--- that’s Before Christ---and “AD”—Anno Domini---which is Latin and means “the year of Our Lord”

 Jesus is the focal point of all of history

What we call “New Years Day”---is the 8th day in the “Octave of Christmas”---what does that mean?

In OT—the biggest feasts of the year---you would have a big celebration---and then a week later---on the 8th day----you would have another huge celebration

So our liturgical calendar is similar to the OT---on the 8th Day of Christmas---is New Year’s Day---*again our year revolves around the life of Jesus*—the birth of Jesus—the saving work of Jesus

That’s why a lot of people are trying to change the way we count the years---Some now refer to “BCE”—that stands for “Before the Common Era”---and then they refer to the time after Jesus as “CE”—or the “Common Era”

So people are trying to take Jesus out of things---but the fact is our calendar is based on Jesus---every new year begins on the “Octave of His birth”---every year is counted from the time of His birth

Although in all honesty—when the calendar was developed they were about 4 years off on the birth of Jesus---but the idea is the same—*we are now entering into “the Year of Our Lord” 2021*

Usually the Church calls for us to pray for peace on New Year’s Day—why?

 Because Jesus is the “Prince of Peace”

And it’s only when more and more people make Him the Lord of their lives---that true peace will reign in our world

So we want to be praying for peace between nations---we want to be praying for peace in our families---we want to be praying for peace in our places of work and in our schools

 And of course we want to be praying for peace in our own hearts

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But my friends—it’s essential to know that we will not have peace in our hearts—in our families—in our schools or places of work—or between nations---until more and more people allow the “Prince of Peace” to reign in their lives

I’m not just talking about believing in Jesus---*but allowing Him to reign in our lives*---allowing His life to be lived in ours---making Him the be all and end all of our existence

When we do that—we will personally be at peace---when everyone in our family does that---our families will have incredible peace---when a culture does that---the nation can be at peace internally

My friends—it’s certainly very clear that over the past 60 years or so—more and more people in our country have pushed Jesus out of the center of their lives—and what do we have?

 More and more racial strife—more and more violence

The only reason violent crime had been going down in our country---*of course this past year there was a huge spike in violence*—but violence had been trending down---but it was because we had more and more people in prison---not because people had peace in their hearts—for crime to go down we had to lock up more and more people

As we as a culture have pushed God out of the center---we have more and more people looking to drugs to deaden the emptiness in them—more and more suicide—more and more exploitation

Human trafficking—sexual exploitation—the explosion of abortions throughout the world

You see—when Jesus doesn’t reign in our hearts---there’s less and less peace in our personal lives—in our families---in our nation

Pray for peace---*and work for peace*---but the greatest way you can work for peace is to work to allow Jesus to reign in your heart and in the hearts of others

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And finally---pray fervently

In our gospel today we’re told—“that Mary kept all these things—reflecting on them in her heart”

This is one of two times in the bible when we’re told that Mary pondered the mysteries of God

*This is why we see Mary as a model of prayer*

Notice Mary’s prayer wasn’t asking for things from God---Mary’s prayer was pondering all that God was doing in the world

And my friends—*I want to invite you to ponder these mysteries of the faith with Mary*

Today is officially our celebration of the Motherhood of Mary [Marian vestments]

And remember--Jesus gave us His Mother to be our Mother as He hung on the cross

I want to invite you to pray with Mary

 And the best was to do that is in praying her rosary

In the rosary---and the 20 mysteries we pray in praying all four sets of mysteries

 We can reflect with Mary on the great works of God

We ponder with Mary the great mysteries of God’s love and His wonderful works in bringing His people to salvation

New Year’s Day is a day when people often make resolutions

I want to ask you---if you do not regularly pray the rosary---**make that your resolution**

15 to 20 minutes a day---it gives you the opportunity to reflect with Mary on the great things God has done for your salvation

15 to 20 minutes a day allows you to take Mary by the hand as she tells you about her Son and all that He has done because He loves you and wants you to be with Him forever in the glory of heaven

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My friends—Jesus came in the fullness of time to save you

 He is at the center of history---let Him be at the center of your life

His birth marks the New Year for us—allow His birth to fill you with a deep desire to have your life to more and more revolve around Him

He was born of Mary to change the world---allow Mary to bring you to a new birth of faith so that your life will be changed for the better

Mary pondered the great mysteries of God in her heart---pray the rosary with Mary—so she can help you to enter into those mysteries with a greater sense of urgency---so that His peace can reign in your heart

God bless you and Happy New Year