

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

On this New Year's Eve/Day, today's feast invites us to gaze upon the face of Mary, the Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

Mary remains without doubt the most represented face in Western art, with the exception of Jesus himself.

The reason for this may well be that in sending his Son to be "born of a woman," God has reached into one of the most basic and essential aspects of humanity - motherhood - in order to share Divine life with us.

And so it is understandable why devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is so strong.

Mary's pivotal and intimate role in God's plan of salvation makes her shrine a fitting meeting place for humans who wish to approach their God.

That is why we pray: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!"

And Mary has given us a beautiful lesson in prayer in today's Gospel when she "kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."

God has called each of us to play our role in the divine plan of salvation, just as he called Mary ...

... and so we need to imitate her by spending time in contemplative prayer in order to understand the mission we have been given.

Today's feast also reminds us that God sent his Son to be born of a human mother, and through that Son, Jesus, we have been adopted as the children of God.

As brothers and sisters of Jesus we have become heirs through him to the eternal life God has promised.

And God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts so that we might call God "Abba, Father."

We have been invited into a very personal intimacy with the divine family of the Trinity.

And so, on this New Year's Eve/Day, I propose several resolutions we might each make:

1. To spend more time in quiet reflective prayer each day.

I know that it can be difficult to find a place in our busy schedules, but even science has testified that prayer is good for one's overall health and well-being.

2. To recognize our dignity, and the dignity of others, as children of God.

January 1st is also considered to be a day of prayer for world peace, I can think of no better path to peace than truly seeing each other as sons and daughters of God.

3. And finally, as God blessed his people through Aaron and his sons, so God want us to live as blessings to others.

How can I let God's face of love shine upon others?

How can I be a source of God's graciousness for others?

How can I look at others with kindness and bring God's peace to them?

Relying upon the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin and invoking the powerful name of Jesus, we ask God's blessing upon these resolutions, upon each of us, and upon the whole world as we set out this New Year of grace.