January 1: Mary, Mother of God (Num:22-27, Gal 4:4-7, Lk 2:16-21)

 **THE LORD HAS DONE MARVELS**

Soon after Jesus was conceived, his virgin mother expressed her joy: “The Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him” (Luke 1:49-50).

The birth of Jesus began a new age. Every year before and afterwards is numbered from that day. Marvelous things happened then, and lowly outcast men, the shepherds, were the first to hear about them. They went back to their daily tasks, “glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen” (Lk 2:20).

Mary needed time to sort it all out, to reflect and pray about it. She “treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). Today, the beginning of a new year, we treasure all the marvels of the years of our life and ponder them in our hearts.

Let us proclaim the marvels that the Lord has done for each of us that no history books will record.

When the appointed time came, God sent his Son (Gal 4:4), born of each one of us, born a subject of the laws that govern our life, our personality and growth. God sent his Son to redeem us and the numberless people we meet through our life, all of them subjects of the laws of human limitations and possibilities.

God our Saviour enables us to be adopted as his own sons and daughters. The Almighty has done great things for us. God sends the spirit of his Son into the hearts of men and women of faith. We all name God as our Father.

God’s Son does not appear on earth as a heavenly vision. He forces no one to submit to him as the almighty Son of God. He becomes human, lowly and outcast. No one can recognize him except with the vision of faith. This is a marvel that God works in us: he gives us eyes to see his Son and hearts to love him among our fellows.

Jesus becomes one with us in human life and with limitations, in order to free us from those same limitations and make us sons and daughters adopted by his Father. The Son of God is placed under the laws that limit all men and women. We are penetrated by the Spirit of Jesus to the depths of our being.

We like to think of holy people as perfect in every way, and specially gifted with the joy and peace of God’s visible presence. What a caricature of holiness that is!

The marvelous thing about the saints is not their pious, radiant faces, their flawless personalities, their serene lives above the distractions of ordinary people. This picture is unreal.

The marvelous thing about them is that, although they are ordinary people with their own load of limitations, God has given them a gift of strong faith in him, hope in his promise of freedom, and love for him and their fellows. The Lord has done marvels in spite of their limitations. This is true of Mary, of the saints and of all men and women of faith.

May the Lord continue to do marvels through you. May you continue to rejoice in God your Saviour.

May God make your new year a happy one.

Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,

but by strengthening you to bear it, if it comes.

Not by making your path easy,

but by making you sturdy enough to travel any path.

Not by taking hardship from you,

but by taking all cowardice and fear from your heart.

Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,

but by keeping your face bright even in the shadows.

Not by making your life always pleasant,

but by showing you where people need you most,

and by making you anxious to be there and to help.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace (Num 6:24).