



BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION

January 2026

Words of Holy Scripture to reflect upon in this New Year 2026:

"Go and *diligently* search for the child."

"He must *increase*; I must *decrease*."

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this New Year, we are called and invited to *diligently* search for the Christ Child, Jesus. In relation to this, we are to *decrease* and allow Jesus to *increase* in our lives.

In reference to the First Letter of John:

"If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God, and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is a thing as deadly sin (mortal)...But we are all to remember in this new year: "All wrongdoing is sin."

"We know that anyone begotten by God does not sin; but the one begotten by God he protects, and the Evil One cannot touch him. We know that we belong to God, and the whole world is under the power of the Evil One. We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment to know the one who is true. And we are in the one who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."

So, then: Are you under the power of God or that of the Evil One? If under the power, the *influence*, of the Evil One, then, now, at the beginning of the New Year, it is important to go back to the beginning - our Baptism - and take our stand against the Evil One and sin, and then, to profess our faith.

It is of utmost importance, for the sake of your salvation, to *renounce* Satan and all his works and empty promises. In order to be truly free, we must renounce all the *lies* the Enemy has led us to believe about ourselves, including the *obstacles* he has laid across our paths, and the *idols* we have substituted for our worship of God that have led us away from Christ and his teachings.

Throughout the year, we are to "turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." We are to avoid, with God's grace, those sins that are *deadly* - those that will rob our souls of *eternal life*! The consequence of that: utter desolation, darkness and *eternal death* - Hell - total separation from God. That is why it is so important that we take this *stand* over and over again which will help to ground us in faith and in our relationship with Jesus as the Lord of our life.

So, let us go back to the beginning, our Baptism, and renew our response and stance as it is presented in the Rite of Baptism Here are the powerful words that are life changing:

Do you *reject* Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

And all his works?

And all his empty promises?

Do you *reject* sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

Do you *reject* the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

If your response is: “I do!” Then, now, what do you profess and believe?

Do you *believe* in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Do you *believe* in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Do you *believe* in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Brothers and sisters, rejoice!

“This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Amen.

Bishop Cotta