



Homily for 01/01/23

Very Rev. J. David Carter, JCL, JV

*The Octave of Christmas – Mary, Mother of God*

Today we celebrate many things. The first thing to say is Merry Christmas! This is the Octave Day of Christmas. Today is also designated as a solemnity of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary. We celebrate her as the Mother of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both God and Man. So, Mary is rightly called the Mother of God. Lastly, in the secular calendar by which we mark the days of the year this stands as the first day of a new year. Happy New Year! It is customary as we begin a new year to make certain resolutions. We do this in the hope that we might make this new year better than the one that came before. This year I propose four new year's resolutions for you to consider. They are: To believe more rightly, to act more justly, to pray more deeply and to worship more devoutly.

We only love what we know. Faith is the type of knowledge that grants us access to the loving heart of our God. The sources of our faith in God are Sacred Scripture, the Sacred Tradition of the Church, and the Magisterium of the Pope and Bishops in union with him. This year, I propose that we believe more rightly by rededicating ourselves to daily reading of the Scriptures, either as individuals or even as a family. We must know the story of salvation revealed to us and pass this knowledge on to our children. I also recommend obtaining and reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There are also many resources on the internet that can provide us with sound catechetical knowledge of our faith.

But believing is one thing and acting in faith is another. Jesus clearly tells us that not all who say "Lord, Lord," will be saved, but only the one who does the will of God. He also says, "if you love me, keep my commandments." To be practicing Catholic Christians we must act justly before God and man. This year I encourage you to work on whatever vice has kept you from acting justly before God and man. Learn to do justice. Perform works of charity. Charity covers a multitude of sins.

Believing rightly and acting justly are just the beginning of the mystery of faith. God came to dwell with us. The dwelling he chooses in Baptism is the human heart. The Lord almighty desires entrance into the interior temple that he created. Entering into that silent space of the heart in the interior of our being, where we think and desire, is the act of meditation. Inviting God to share that space is the art of prayer. This year, I encourage you to pray more deeply. Daily invite the Lord into His dwelling in the interior of your heart. Go there frequently to commune with him, that he may bring you peace and joy.

Because of what God has done for us in creating us, redeeming us, and sanctifying us by His saving grace, we owe him the debt of gratitude and worship. This year, I encourage you to worship God more devoutly. Attend to the sacred mysteries of our faith, especially through the Sacred Liturgy. Make it a sure effort to come to Mass every Sunday, and perhaps even consider coming to a daily Mass every once in a while. You may also consider joining me and the clergy of the parish in praying the Liturgy of the Hours, which we do regularly in the morning and evening. Come into God's presence frequently. The church is open daily for set hours. Make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Pray the Rosary. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Make the Stations of the Cross; they are not just limited to Lent. By making these New Year's resolutions to believe more rightly, act more justly, pray more deeply, and worship more devoutly, it is my hope that you will experience much peace and joy this year despite the volatile times we live in. This is precisely what God came to save us. Do not be afraid to take Him up on his offer of Life in abundance! May Jesus Christ be praised! Now and forever.