

## **New Year Vigil Year B: December 31, 2023. Thank God for what I am not and for what I am.**

It is a tradition on a day like this when the world is celebrating what many call crossover; we gather to make so many prophecies on what will happen in the next year, or we pray for more blessings upon our families, though few reflect on their spiritual journal, thanking God for allowing them to serve him and others.

Similarly, on a day like this, people make New Year's resolutions; all these are not bad in themselves, but the way we present them is sometimes faulty. It is not a guarantee that when you make resolutions or prophecies, everything is going to be well. To realize all these, one must cooperate with the grace of God; we must try to live a good life as well in the New Year; and we must back up our prophecies with genuine prayers.

That being said, I want us to reflect on this day: the blessings we receive from January to December, what we achieve, and the ones we cannot. How often we show love and fail to show love; how committed are we to our faith and how lazy we have been; how many times we are generous with what God has given us; and the times we are selfish. Reflecting on all these gives us ideas of what we should aspire to do in the new year.

Furthermore, we must appreciate God for the gift of life and all the other benefits we have enjoyed in 2023.

We thank God that we are responsible people; we can cater for our family; and we thank God for helping us to think reasonably and not to think of killing others so that we may live or even commit suicide despite our frustration with what is happening in the world. We thank God for giving our parents wisdom to allow us to live and to love us so much. We thank God for the lives of others, irrespective of who they are; they have helped make our journey smooth. Thank God for our faith, which encourages us to value all people and enables us to show dignity for human life. Thank God for not allowing us to get lost, and even when we were lost, he found us and renewed our spirit. Thank God for giving us children and letting them become our source of happiness whenever we see them. Thank God for what we are and what we are not.

Despite the challenges of this year, there are many blessings we have received. Let us continue to pray for our leaders, both spiritual and political, that they may use their authority to create an environment where everyone lives in peace, where love and progress are established, and where the dignity of human life is respected from conception to death.

Lastly, as we come to the end of the year 2023, let us have a deeper reflection on our past and see how we can make amendments in the coming year. As the year goes on, our days are becoming shorter on earth; there is a need to ask some fundamental questions: Where will I be after this earthly journey? Have I been human during the year 2023, if yes do I have the intention of doing more, and if not, what is my New Year resolution? What is my relationship with God? Beloved in Christ, the world is becoming more evil day by day; wars and crisis everywhere, sickness is on the increase despite the many expertise. Saint Peter wrote, Stay Alert! Watch out for your great enemy; the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." (5:8).

In the gospel, Jesus warned that we should all gird our loins, light our lamps, and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding. We must be vigilant in how we live our lives; let us do away with evil thoughts and seek the Lord. By virtue of being Christians, we are children of light; therefore, as we step into a new year, let us try our best to be the light that can shine on the dome of this world. The three readings called us to prepare, for our time is short. Saint Paul said the time is running out; let's live, as 2024 is the last year we have. Like the Psalmist, let us pray to God to give success to the works of our hands in the coming year.

Congratulations to us all as we complete the journey of the year 2023. Welcome to 2024. Make a genuine resolution!

Peace,

Fr. Jingbe Simon