



MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 67

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:16-21

*Belonging Before Becoming
A New Year of Adoption, Not Anxiety*

Mother Church, on January 1, does something quietly wise. Before we make resolutions, set goals, or plan self-improvement, she reminds us **who we are—and whose we are.**

She begins the year not with effort, but with Mary **Mother of God.**

Mary does not achieve her role.

- She receives it. She ponders. She consents.
- *“I am the servant of the Lord; may it be done to me.”*
- Salvation begins as gift before it becomes mission.
- God enters the world not through force or spectacle, but through a **family.**

That is why Paul’s words in Galatians 4 are sometimes called *his Christmas story.*

“When the fullness of time had come...”

- when everything that needed to happen had happened
- when the moment was right—**God acted.**

God sent His Son.

- God intervened.
- God was on a mission.

Born of a woman—

- at a time when women had no public status,
- God quietly elevates their dignity.

Born under the law—

- Paul, a Pharisee formed by the law, knows its weight.
- The law shows us God’s goodness, but it also reveals our limits.

To ransom those under the law

- We fall short—not only of God’s law, but often of our own standards.

And why does God act?

“So that we might receive adoption as sons.”

- In the first century, adoption was not about infants or children.
- It was about **identity and inheritance**.
- Julius Caesar adopted his young adult great-nephew, Gaius Octavian in his will. Octavian was free to accept or refuse.
 - But if he accepted, everything changed: a new name, a new family, a new inheritance—and even the mission of the one who adopted him.
 - He did not earn that status.
 - He received it and then learned how to live from it.
 - Eventually he became Caesar Augustus, a footnote in the birth of Jesus

That is Paul’s point.

And it is **our story**.

*“so you are no longer a slave but a son,
and if a son then also an heir through God”*

MASS MATTERS

- Introductory Rites
 - Sign of the cross; adopted at baptism
 - We come because we belong not to audition
 - We confess because we are secure enough to be honest
- Liturgy of the Word
 - Heart speaks to heart
 - The voice we trust shapes the life we live
- Offertory
 - Because I belong, I offer myself freely
 - My joys, dreams, sorrows and sins
 - God speaks most clearly to a heart that is honest about one’s poverty
- Communion
 - nourishment for the journey & not a reward for good behavior
 - I receive who I need not what I have earned

- Dismissal
 - You are sent with the fragrance of freedom
 - Sent like adopted heirs with a mission that flows from this identity.

As **2026** begins,
let Mother Church remind us—*heart speaks to heart*.

Before we improve ourselves,
we remember who we are and whose we are.

In the spirit of John Henry Newman:

- Grace gives you your identity.
- Faith is the root that receives before it acts.
- Obedience gives your life direction.
- Freedom is the quiet fragrance that follows when love, not fear, is the motive.

So, live this year not as a slave trying harder,
but as a child learning trust—
from adoption, not anxiety