



In a few hours, we will celebrate the coming of the New Year. Like all other new year's celebration, I'm sure it's going to be another carnival-like atmosphere celebration. In the midst of all the noise, fun and excitement, however, comes a



reminder to put aside a time to make the most important resolution of all: to take the first hour of the new year to thank the Lord for all the blessings and challenges last year that made us a better person, and for the grace that we need to start of a new life, reborn and renewed. We are invited to pause and review the life that we had, ponder on the many events that transpired in our lives during this year that is about to end, look into the path we have found ourselves on and where we seem to be heading and resolve to have a fresh start as if that first hour of the new year is the hour that we are first born. We cannot, however, do all these things in the midst of a noisy world both from within and without, noises that cancel out the Spirit speaking to us in a faint voice, inviting us contemplate on what it is that God might have been doing all this time to us individually.

Not all of us, perhaps, will greet the New Year with a bash. Perhaps, this year that is about to end proved to have been a trying year. Perhaps, we experienced a death of a loved one; or our home was foreclosed; or a relationship ended up broken. Perhaps, we recently received news that we or a loved one has cancer or a debilitating disease. For some of us, we look at the future of our nations with great anxiety as we face a lot of uncertainties. In all these challenges, however, we look to Mary as our model. Mary, in faith, kept all that she encountered in her heart always contemplating on what God was perhaps doing. She spent her life in discernment trying to put together disparate pieces of the mystery trusting that God was using all these to work on something greater, something that perhaps she would never fathom. Tomorrow's feast of Mary the mother of God, opens the new year with a foundational Christian faith reality: that God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son to save us from eternal death.

As we prepare to greet the new year may we, like Mary, trust without a single doubt that Jesus, as the Word made flesh, is indeed our Savior. Jesus encounters us in our daily struggles to open us to his ultimate purpose to make us sharers in his divinity. May we make the resolution to begin the first hour of the new year with a life renewed and reborn by making Mary's heart our own, a heart that is open to the fullness of God's grace.

May the Lord bless you and keep you! May He let His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you His peace (Numbers 6:24-26).

*On behalf of Fathers Lieu and Robain, and the parish office staff, we wish you and your families a blessed New Year!*

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## OUR NEW YOUTH MINISTRY AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR



**THERESE NGUYEN**, is our new Youth Ministry and Communications Coordinator, effective January 2, 2024. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Music at the Catholic University of America. Therese is no stranger to our community. She started as a participant to our youth ministry program for many years, and have worked with Kevin in our Youth Ministry. She is excited to take on her new role as a youth ministry coordinator and explore the new department in our parish, which is the Office of Communications. Aside from leading our youth ministry program, she will oversee our parish bulletin, constant contact, website, and other social media platforms. She

will help develop a plan, and implement ways to better communicate our programs and activities with you, our parishioners as well as with our greater community in our mission to share the Good News to those who have not heard it. SFOA is blessed to have you, Therese! Please give her your awesome welcome!