

January 1, 2026—Mary, the Mother of God

God had great plans for humanity! In the beginning we were meant to have a close, personal friendship with God like Adam and Eve, and live with Him, without death, in the glory of heaven after our earthly lives ended. Even though Original Sin frustrated that plan, God didn't give up on us but formulated something even greater.

This new plan gradually unfolded, as we read in the books of the Old Testament, reaching a high point in the covenant with Moses. We call it the Old Covenant because it was transitional and was fulfilled in the New Covenant through Jesus. St. Paul summarized it in the Second Reading when he wrote to the Galatians: **“God sent His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”** and daughters. It is because of the gracious gift that we received in baptism that we are able to call God, Father. The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer in the Holy Mass with **“At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say: Our Father . . .”** It is a privilege, a great honor to be a son or daughter of God; we should try to remember that each time we say the Lord's prayer.

We complete the Octave of Christmas with this Feast of Mary, the Mother of God. Remember the Christmas season continues until January 11 and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The simple Gospel of this day focuses us once again on the Nativity of our Lord. This time we are looking at it through the eyes of Mary as the Mother of God.

Mary contemplated all the events starting with the Archangel Gabriel's announcement at the Annunciation and her consent, **“Be it done unto me according to your word”**, then the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist at the Visitation to her cousin Elizabeth, and finally, the birth of our Savior on Christmas day. She saw the shepherds arrive with the message of the angels who sang **“Glory to God in the highest”** at this most holy birth. Those humble, poor men were the first to be privileged to see and worship the Christ-child. The Magi, who were wealthy, educated, kings, would come later; the simple and humble were first.

The gospel told us that **“Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”** Our Lady wasn't just recalling facts, she understood these events on a much deeper level. Our minds, even the most intelligent or educated, are dimmed because of the effects of Original Sin, but hers was not. She could see how the

promises of the Messiah, the Savior, in the Old Testament were being fulfilled right before her eyes in a most unexpected way. The whole world was looking elsewhere in its self-centeredness and busyness, while she was looking into the eyes of her Son, her Savior and Lord.

Through the Sacred Liturgy, which recalls these events each year, the Church helps us to understand them more fully. Just as the years roll on, we are meant to grow in maturity and experience and grace, that way, they never grow old but present something new for us to contemplate. You can read a passage in the Holy Bible 30 times, and the 31st time the Holy Spirit gives you a new insight!

The Holy Rosary is a prayer that helps us to meditate throughout the year on the whole plan of salvation in the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries. It keeps all these events before our eyes.

New Year's Day reminds us that we can begin again in our spiritual life and family life. Sometimes we can feel trapped by the past, but our weaknesses and bad habits don't have to determine our future. We can really begin again, each day. With God's grace and the knowledge that we are children of God let's begin anew to walk with Jesus.

Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us.