



Immaculate Conception
Church

Homily for New Year's Day
2015

There is no gift more precious and more treasured than the gift of time. And yet time can seem so different for each one of us.

For a child...time takes forever. Time drags by...moving with the pace of a snail.

For a teenager and young adult...time is endless. There is that sense of never-ending time where everything is challenged and nothing is feared and one has all the time in the world.

As you age the sands of time seem to move more quickly as the years become decades and the decades cause the parameters of your life to slowly narrow.

For the elderly, time is a collection of precious memories, fond recollections and sometimes very serious regrets. For the elderly time is also a fountain of wisdom giving them the ability to focus more clearly on the present moment.

Time is what we celebrate on this first day of a New Year. We hail this day as a gift of time filled with promise and new hope. It is a day that marks our transition from what was to what shall be. It is a day that promises us nothing yet affords us endless possibilities.

As a people of faith we gather on this New Year's Day to honor Mary, the great woman of faith. We are told, once again, how she used time...to treasure and reflect in her heart all that God had done for her and how God was giving direction to her life. Her example should speak to us for we also need to take the time to treasure and reflect within our own hearts what God is doing and what God is calling us to do.

As a Church we are asked to take this day, this beginning of a New Year, and pray for peace. A week ago we heard the angels announce the gift of peace as they proclaimed the birth of the Savior. But peace is an illusive reality. Our hearts often prefer to push peace aside and seek after other ways of gaining our desires.

On this first day of a New Year, as we reflect on the presence of God in our lives, we are called to realize that without our individual commitment the gift of peace could easily become nothing more than an empty proclamation. The promise of peace calls us to become peace-makers. It calls us to make peace with those from whom we are estranged. It calls us to build bridges to those who have become our enemies instead of our friends. To be bearers of peace means to learn that without forgiveness, peace has little chance of survival. To be a channel of God's peace is to be willing to make the first step in bringing harmony and forgiveness to our relationships. If we wait for the other person to do that...we probably will wait forever. For the peace that God seeks in our lives and in the life of the world depends not on the action of others but on our actions and our own initiatives.

As a people who know and believe that all time ends in an eternity of time and who seek to prepare for that eternity by what we say and do now, we pray we might learn from Mary to become more attentive to God's presence in our hearts. And mindful of that presence may we use the gift of time to bring peace to our families and friends so that the world itself may grow in love and harmony. May the proclamation of the angels for "Peace on Earth" take root in our hearts this day and on all the days to come in this gift of a New Year.