

**New Year's Day 2021 A**  
**Numbers 6.22-27///Gal. 4.4-7///Luke 2.16-21**

→have you ever noticed....we have an insatiable appetite for new things....

→we are constantly asking one another “what’s new”....television, the internet...and every other form of communication does well to keep us up to date on the latest happenings...

→we search constantly to find out what new things are out there....

→[and] there are “new” things that are worth celebrating: a new job, a new car, a new outfit

→while other “new” things may be approached with a guarded optimism: a new acquaintance, a new teacher, a new president

→then there are other “new” things that are cause for no celebration at all: a new pain somewhere, a new bill we weren’t expecting, a new health diagnosis **and an unexpected pandemic.**

→however among all of the many new things we face in life...this NEW YEAR is being welcomed with great joy, enthusiasm, expectation, and hope.

→most of us always approach a New Year as something worth celebrating...but this New Year rings all the more true as we embark on untested time that will hopefully bring prosperity and goodness, health and well-being, happiness and joy...

→and so it is good for us to begin right here....where we are now...gathering in our church...to celebrate God’s blessings

PAUSE

→today’s first reading is one that we are all familiar with as it is sometimes used as a final blessing at Mass

→it is the blessing used by Aaron the high priest, the brother of Moses, blessing God's people as they prepared for their journey to the promised land.

→then.....as we hear in the Gospel... the angels have sung and the shepherds have come....the holy family is together...starting a new life, creating new memories and beginning a journey unlike any family has ever taken.

→however.....nestled in this Gospel passage today...is an insight into our Lord's mother; her character; manner **and [her]** strength

→on this day, we hear words spoken of Mary, the Mother of God, and her response to all that has taken place around the birth of her son...that... "*she treasured all of these things...reflecting on them in her heart.*"

→ [in reality]....there really.....is no greater story to tell, no more valuable treasure to store up in our hearts.....than the Good News that God has come among us in Jesus Christ.

→and that is what we celebrate today on this first day of the New Year.

PAUSE

→2020 was certainly not what we expected.

→it presented us with challenges, trials, adversities and ordeals that we could have never imagined...

→the pandemic impacted and influenced every aspect of our entire lives

→however for all the disappointments and hardships that 2020 gave us...it also produced some blessings and good things that I think we need to remember and be grateful for:

→in the midst of shutdowns and suspensions...we rediscovered our imagination and creativity for family life, for work, and for play

→stay at home...produced and allowed us to uncover a new appreciation for a simple and unassuming way of life

→distance gave way to a whole new understanding of the word ZOOM and togetherness

→and hopefully the absence of worship made us appreciate the privilege and need to gather, celebrate and receive the Eucharist whenever possible.

→so in spite of all the negative and adverse challenges the past 12 months have presented to us...there have been some blessings and goodness that has lead us to this day.

→a New Year of hope and expectation, optimism and courage.

→and hopefully beginning today we can look at each day with a sense of hope and light instead of fear and anxiety.

PAUSE

→today we see Mary...taking to heart...her witness of the miracle that is Christmas

→she quietly and beautifully treasures all these things that tell the story of Jesus in her heart

→even though she could not have possibly understood everything that was to lay ahead...for herself, and her child

→on this day **they** started a new path in life //// a new hope //// and a new confidence

→today on this DAY (2021 years later) we too begin a new path, a new hope...and a new confidence to spread and live the mission and message of Jesus Christ

→...we have been given another New Year to ponder the presence of God in our lives.

--...we have been given another opportunity to treasure the presence of Christ among us...in our families and in our world...

PAUSE

→may we, like Mary, ponder the life of Jesus and ask how his values, his heart, his love will guide us in the coming months...

...how his presence will be made known among us and in our world

→may we, like Mary, truly hope to make a difference this year in our lives...and strive to live the challenges of the Gospel message each and every day

→and may we like Mary, cherish these times....celebrate with joy...and return to the fullness of life.

→May 2021 bring God's blessings and peace...health and well-being...to our families, community and to our parish of Saint William...

→and may God continue the Good Work started in each of us.....in this coming year!