

*The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God*  
*New Year's Day ~ January 1, 2012*  
*Homily*

*Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski*  
*The Catholic Community of*  
*St. John the Evangelist*  
*and Blessed Sacrament*

The name “January” comes from the Roman god Janus, the god with two faces—one looking back at the year that has just ended and the other looking to the future. This is indeed a time to look back at the year that has just ended and to look to the new year ahead of us.

Two thousand eleven has truly been a year of grace. We celebrated our 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a people. We became partners with Blessed Sacrament Parish in Burton.

Closer to home, how did I spend this one year of my life that has just passed? Did I use it to advance my goals and objectives in life? Did I use it to enhance the purpose of my existence? Could I have done better last year in the way I invested my time between the demands of work, school, family, friends and society? How about the demands of my spiritual life? What did I achieve last year and what did I fail to achieve? Through soul searching with questions like these, we find that a review of the past year naturally leads to setting goals and resolutions for the next year.

There are people who tell you that there is no point making New Year's resolutions. I hear about one poor fellow who decided to make only resolutions this year he could keep. He resolved to gain weight, to stop exercising, to read less and watch more TV, to procrastinate more, to quit giving money and time to charity, and never ever make any New Year's resolutions again.

Do not believe them. We must set goals and make resolutions as a necessary conclusion to our review of the past year. We do need to review our lives from year to year because, as Socrates said, the unexamined life is not worth living.

There are plenty of New Year's resolutions floating around. Most of those are not resolutions at all but only wishes. What is the difference between a resolution and a wish? A wish identifies a goal one wants to reach; a resolution specifies the steps one will take to reach it.

A wish says, “This is where I want to be.” A resolution says, “This is the road I will take. This is what I will do to get there.”

The wishful person says, “I want to pass my exams this year.” The resolved person says, “I will devote an extra hour to my studies every day in order to pass my exams.”

The wishful person says, “I will have more peace and love in my family this year.” The resolved person says, “I will spend more time with my family at table instead of rushing off to watch TV or work at my computer.”

The wishful person says, “I will live a life in union with God this year.” The resolved person says, “I will set aside time each day to pray and hear God’s word.”

The difference between wishing and resolving is that we are prepared to do what it takes to make our dreams come true. We are prepared to pay the price.

The Gospel today presents Mary to us as the model of that new life in Christ that all of us wish for ourselves in the New Year. We see that Mary was prepared to do something to reach this goal. What did she do?

We hear that the shepherds, when they went to adore the child Jesus in the manger, told all that the angels had said to them, “*Mary kept all of these things, reflecting on them in her heart.*” Mary was a woman who valued the word of God, who treasured it and made time to meditate and ponder it.

Sure, the holiness of Mary is attributed to the grace of God, but she took it upon herself in every moment of life to make an effort to cooperate with the grace of God. She pondered the word of God in order to discern what God was saying to her at every stage in her life as the handmaid of God.

Whatever the situation in which we find ourselves—a hardship, a disappointment, a worry, a decision to make—God has a solution, an answer that is right for us. Not only do we need to tell God about it, but we need to listen to what God has to tell us about it.

Prayer is a conversation with God. But sometimes all we do is pick up the phone, read off our list of problems and drop the phone without listening to hear what God has to say to us. I invite you to join me in this New Year to listen more to the voice of God, to treasure God’s word and ponder it in our hearts. Then we shall be able to realize our New Year’s resolution of a new life in union with God.

