

We gather on this New Year's Day to celebrate Mass not because it is New Year's but because of this Solemnity which occurs one week after Christmas in honour of Mary, in honour of her most important title, that of Mother of God.

Now that being said, one of the things we do at New Year's is to take stock, to look over the past year and examine where we have been. This past year has not been a good one with much suffering, anxiety and uncertainty. At New Year's we also look forward to the year that is ahead as we make resolutions and commit ourselves to a new path. This New Year is beginning with more of the same pandemic restrictions but we do have hope for a better 2021.

And it is in this light that I would like to unpack today's Second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation, Jesus is God, born for us, God in the flesh. "As St. Paul looks back on this event, he simply says that "In the fullness of time God sent his Son, born of a woman." And he was sent to the Jewish people, "Born under the law" in order to redeem those under the law so that we might receive adoption to sonship"

And here the use of son is important, for at this time the first-born son was the one who received the inheritance of his father's estate. The first born son possessed a special dignity in relation to the father.

And so according to St. Paul, all of us, because of Jesus, have that same relationship with God. We are all heirs; this inheritance is for all of us. Our inheritance is something for which we look forward. One day it will be ours. St. Paul reminds that the most important inheritance that we will ever receive is already ours. Our adoption as sons and daughters of God. The gift of the Spirit that allows us to cry out Abba Father.

St. Paul looks back to Christmas, the Son born of Mary, born to the Jewish people born to redeem us. And St. Paul looks forward to the inheritance that is ours because we share in that sonship. We are heirs to the life of God given to us in his Son.

The Gospel for today is a continuation of the Christmas Gospel of the birth of Jesus. The shepherds go to Bethlehem and recount the message that they have received from the angels. And Mary takes these words and pondered them in her heart. As we listen to St. Paul's words today-we also need to ponder them in our hearts. To take them in, absorb them and to see that we are truly adopted sons and daughters, no longer slaves but heirs to the kingdom of God.