

Mary the Mother of God 2021 “Where Should We Place Our Hope” (December 31st Version)

Fr. Frank Schuster

Welcome to our going away party for 2020. Who here is sad to see it go? Who here wants to help me show 2020 to the door? However, as hard as this is to hear, we probably shouldn't let this year end. I will tell you why. That would be admitting that 2021. I apologize for that terrible joke. On the other hand, I think we should all be just a little concerned that when 2020 turns 21, it will start drinking alcohol. Let's hope that does not happen.

Here we are on New Year's Eve and this actually isn't a going away party for 2020. This is a celebration that through all of life's troubles, and this year we have had a few, we are blessed to be under the watchful care of Mary, the Mother of God. This is good news. This feast day celebrates is that a human being in history said “yes” to giving birth to our omnipotent God, welcoming him into our existence. Mary gave God a human nature which means that, as much as we sometimes would like to think of being in the flesh as more of a predicament than a blessing, our fleshy human existence has been sanctified. God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. This means our bodies can truly be temples of the Holy Spirit. There is a supernatural dignity of being human because of Mary's role as a mother in our salvation history.

This feast day is also a celebration that no matter what life throws at us, our future is not filled with emptiness. Because God became man in the person of Jesus Christ, our future is filled with hope. As our Pope Emeritus said in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*, this hope in the future should have an impact on how we deal with whatever we are going through in a way that someone without hope can't.

As we enter into a new year during the darkest time of year, we are a people who seek light, who seek hope. There is always a danger of putting our faith in false hopes. Can I be so bold as to suggest that our faith in God this coming year should not be based on vaccines, or the change in government leadership, or the direction of the economy? If we base our faith in God on these things, I suspect that the light at the end of the tunnel might end up being a freight train.

As we enter into a new year, the only light in this world that can offer us salvation is Jesus. That is also what this feast day challenges us to consider because everything about Mary points us to her Son. The clearest example of this are the last words we hear from Mary in the bible (at the Wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John) when she says, “Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” Very good advice from our spiritual Mother! And so, as the clock ticks to midnight this evening and we enter into what truthfully is an uncertain 2021, can we contemplate the many ways we can grow closer to the Lord this coming year regardless of what the headlines bring?

Mary the Mother of God 2021 Where Should We Place Our Hope (January 1st Version)

Fr. Frank Schuster

Who here last night had a going away party for 2020? Who here is sad to see it go? Who here is happy to show 2020 to the door? However, as hard as this is to hear, we probably shouldn't have let this past year end. I will tell you why. We are in a way admitting that 2021. I apologize for that terrible joke. On the other hand, I think we should all be just a little concerned that now that 2020 turned 21, it will start drinking alcohol. Let's hope that does not happen.

Here we are on New Year's Day and this actually isn't a going away party for 2020. This is a celebration that through all of life's troubles, and this past year we have had a few, we are blessed to be under the watchful care of Mary, the Mother of God. This is good news. This feast day celebrates is that a human being in history said "yes" to giving birth to our omnipotent God, welcoming him into our existence. Mary gave God a human nature which means that, as much as we sometimes would like to think of being in the flesh as more of a predicament than a blessing, our fleshy human existence has been sanctified. God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. This means our bodies can truly be temples of the Holy Spirit. There is a supernatural dignity of being human because of Mary's role as a mother in our salvation history.

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As we enter into this New Year, the only light in this world that can offer us salvation is Jesus. That is also what this feast day challenges us to consider because everything about Mary points us to her Son. The clearest example of this are the last words we hear from Mary in the bible (at the Wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John) when she says, "Do whatever Jesus tells you to do." Very good advice from our spiritual Mother! And so, as we find ourselves entering into what truthfully is an uncertain 2021, can we contemplate the many ways we can grow closer to the Lord this coming year regardless of what the headlines bring?