



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Mary, Mother of God – 1<sup>st</sup> January**

### ***Thankfulness***

*Readings: Numbers 6: 22-27, Ps 66, Galatians 4: 4-7, Luke 2: 16-21*

When I woke up this morning with a clear head and eight comfortable hours in the warm sack behind me, the prospect of a beautiful liturgy before me and a hearty breakfast to come, it was difficult to repress a tidal wave of smugness – not one of the seven deadliest sins but wholly unbecoming a person of any depth of spirituality. Perhaps if I rebranded it as a profound sense of gratitude, it would sit better with an aspiration to holiness.

Anyway, there we are, smug or thankful or a vichyssoise of both, that's how I felt.

I had, as is my custom on New Year's Eve, retired to bed with a good book at half past ten. My mobile telephone was off to avoid the inevitable mass expressions of goodwill that disturb the 'shuteye' whenever some overemotional friend decides to send messages of awesome festive banality to his entire address book. My last waking moments were to the sound of several people of various genders preparing to start the New Year as they finished the old, noisily, vulgarly and unhappily. They and their dogs were barking at one another at the end of the lane in a feast of aggressive complaint.

I have never understood the attraction of New Year. It is something we seem to have imported wholesale from north of the border. There, with their midge infested heaths and dreary Calvinism, one can understand why the most sensible approach to the future would be to greet it in an alcoholic stupor. Perhaps as the English now celebrate the Nativity of the Saviour as an orgy of unsatisfying consumerism, free of Jesus, and are reduced to a soulless materialism, they are heading the same way.

As Christians our year began in Advent and the great season of hope and promise has unfolded in the glorious gift of God in His Only Son, Jesus. As we move forward through the Octave, we bathe in the great saints' days and finally in today's Solemnity, the Feast of Mary, Mother of God.

I woke this morning – I'm not the sort of chap who has a song in his heart much before coffee but if I were I would have been awash with cardiac melody:

to go to the altar and thank God for Jesus

to thank God for His Blessed Mother whose 'Yes' to God made  
salvation possible

to thank God for humbling Himself to be born of Woman and  
entrusting Himself to the loving arms of Mary

to thank God that, through the gracious gift of Jesus on the Cross,  
Mary has become my Mother and mother to every beloved disciple  
and thus Mother of the Church

to thank God that, through Our Lady, you and I have become little  
brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of the Most High

to thank God that when I die I will be borne on the arms of the prayers  
of our Blessed Mother before the mercy seat of Christ's final

judgement.

to thank God for Mary whose obedience to the Word and openness to the Holy Spirit is the exemplar for all who are the Church and will therefore bear Jesus into the world for the salvation of Man.

In short we do not require alcohol to anaesthetise us from reality. On the contrary we are inebriated by the Spirit who is the ultimate and everlasting reality and who makes Christ truly and wonderfully present in the Mass we offer today in thanks for His most blessed Mother and ours.

Whatever the next calendar year brings, the future of those in Christ is secure, glorious and eternal. That is why we celebrate.

Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us.

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