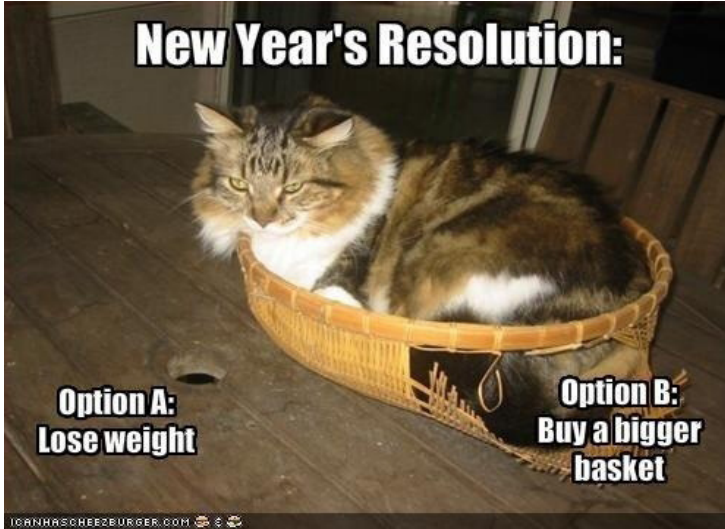


2013



FR. MIKE'S SERMON FOR EPIPHANY

Do you know what would have happened if it had been three wise WOMEN instead of men? They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and brought disposable diapers as gifts! But what the wise women would have said among themselves after they left...

"Did you notice Mary's sandals didn't match her gown?"

Legend has it that there were three male scholars or "magi" who came from the East named Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. Since they represented their King, they were later called "kings." I have always wondered why these three guys spent all their money while travelling for over a year bouncing around uncomfortably on a camel's hump. Caspar came from India. Melchior started from Iran and Balthazar rode from Saudi Arabia. What fueled their passion to follow that star to the new King? Did they seek divine favors for their Kings, riches for their kingdoms, or victory in battle? No. They were seeking Jesus not for what He gives, but worshiped Him for *who* He is. The gifts they offered showed they knew who Jesus is. He is the Divine King (gold for a King) who as Priest would reconnect humanity to God (frankincense perfume used by Priests) by His sacrificial death (oil of myrrh used to anoint a deceased body).

As we begin this New Year, I ask you two questions, "Are you seeking Jesus? Why do you seek Him?" If you are seeking Jesus for what He can give you, perhaps a life free from want, troubles, pain, sickness, or worry, then you will be disappointed. There is no contract that states if you find Jesus, everything will be hunky dory. But if you seek Jesus and follow Him for "who" He is, the Almighty God who deserves your obedience and worship, then He will bless you in the midst of the craziness life can bring. Jesus has helped me carry some pretty heavy crosses. When I put my faith in "who" Jesus is, only then is my heart open to receive "what" Jesus gives. I really don't know how I could have made it through 61 years without my faith in Jesus, who is God watching over me, God protecting me, God guiding me and God Loving me. I believe what Jesus gives me is pure gift because I don't deserve it, nor earn it, nor have a right to demand it. God owes me nothing, but chooses to give me everything.

I can sum up who Jesus is from an old proverb, "Jesus is the One who loves me when I least deserve it, because that's when I need it the most." Jesus has never disappointed me. Happy New Year...Fr. Mike

SOME NEW YEAR'S QUOTES

1) **Jay Leno**

Now there are more overweight people in America than average-weight people. So overweight people are now average... which means, you have met your New Year's resolution.

2) **Anonymous**

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one Year and out the other.

3) **Bill Vaughan**

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to.

4) **Anonymous**

People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and the New Year, but they really should be worried about what they eat between the New Year and Christmas.

What makes a family "Holy" is not a trial-free, painless life. What makes a family "Holy" is loving, enduring, and forgiving together in the midst of the trials. Even though the "Holy Family" suffered for good reasons, yet they still suffered. Here are some examples:

- 1) Joseph knew the pain of betrayal and infidelity until an Angel had to intervene.
- 2) Mary felt the pain of conceiving a child outside of wedlock, even though the real Father was God Himself. Try to explain that to the townsfolk.
- 3) Joseph and Mary lived the pain of fear as they fled King Herod who tried to kill their little baby.
- 4) Joseph felt the weight of responsibility to provide for and protect this unique family.
- 5) Joseph and Mary lost their kid, who just happened to be the Messiah, in a traveling caravan. Imagine the pain of that.
- 6) Joseph and Mary tried to make sense of their Son who believed His absence was no big deal. I don't think Joseph, Mary and Jesus were on the same page that day.
- 7) Mary knew the pain of losing a beloved spouse.
- 8) Jesus knew the pain of losing a father.
- 9) Mary saw her Son misunderstood, mocked, ridiculed and rejected all His Life. How painful that was.
- 10) Mary saw Her Son, arrested, jailed, and executed. She lost both her husband and her Son within three years.
- 11) Jesus died in total agony, feeling the pain of failure.
- 12) As Jesus was rejected, so was His Mother. Mary died in exile in Turkey.

What made this Family so Holy is that they accepted their sufferings with LOVE. As the visionary Vishka told me at Medugore in May 1988 when I asked her what would the Blessed Mother of God tell parents who have lost their children in death to comfort them? She looked directly into my eyes as the interpreter translated Vishka's words where we stood in a courtyard painted blue. "Mary, the Mother of God, would say this: Accept your sufferings with Love for only when you accept your sufferings with Love will you one day understand the meaning of your sufferings and receive the strength to endure them." Later that day at 6:20 p.m. when Mary would appear to the three visionaries at St. James Church, I beheld a large stained glass window of the Pieta, Mary holding her lifeless Son's body in Her arms. I believe at this point the Blessed Mother spoke to me personally. She said, "As I hold my Suffering Son in My arms, so I, your Mother, hold all of My suffering children in My arms with Love."

In the midst of the trials and sufferings your family has and will experience in the New Year, the best way to endure them is to do this: *Love Even More*. Blessings...Fr. Mike