

To my IOP Family: Blessed New Year!

Recently we celebrated: Mary Most Holy Mother of God.

-As we begin 2022, let us remember the words of St. Francis de Sales:

*My past no longer concerns me. It belongs to Divine mercy. My future does not yet concern me. It belongs to Divine providence. **What concerns me and what challenges me is today, which belongs to God's grace and to the devotion of my heart and my good will.***

**Our Lord wants us to take each day, one moment at a time, living for Him.**

Let us follow Mary's example: as we cry out daily:

**LORD LET IT BE DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO THY WILL!**

If we start each day by asking the Lord to direct our path, we will find strength, courage, and direction leading to peace and order.

And after just celebrating the Epiphany (God manifested and visible in and to the world through His Son) may we remember *Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2007 homily for this feast day; "In comparison with King Herod with his interests of power and riches, the Magi...**although they were cultured men, behaved like the shepherds of Bethlehem: they recognized the sign and adored the Child, offering him the precious and symbolic gifts that they had brought with them.**"*

-Reminds me of families I met in the mountains of Honduras. When I visited Honduras in 2009, and we brought the Sacraments to those precious people in the mountains, there was such a joy when they saw the priests, which were able to visit only a few times a year. According to our material standards, these people would be considered very "poor." But in my opinion "spiritually" they were extremely rich. As I sat in their simple huts with packed dirt floors, their joy, hospitality, Hope, and Love of God and life, was evident and infectious. They passed on to me a Hope and Joy that was transformative.

Starting this New Year let us follow the example of these simple Catholics in Honduras, and remember what is most important in life: GOD, FAITH, FAMILY. Material things pass away, but our Catholic faith leads to a hope that we do not merely pass away, but are spiritual beings with a soul that will one day be co-eternal with Almighty God.

*May God bless you today and throughout the coming year.*