



**NEW YEAR MESSAGE
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The New Year is an opportunity to hope and to start again. We hope for a better future for the peoples of the world, for our brothers and sisters in India and Pakistan, for the people in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, in Israel/Palestine, the people of Sudan, Ethiopia and of North Korea. We also hope for a better future for our family members, our friends, for our parish community and the places we work. And above all it is a new beginning for me. I should look at every birthday, every New Year as a gift God gives. God gives me 365 days to love, to do good, to learn, to enjoy, to teach, to give and to pray. It is a brand new gift we get every year.

We begin with hope and joy. The whole world celebrates the birth of a New Year though we were put to the test by the Corona Virus, by floods and other natural calamities. A small virus brought the whole

world to its knees because we failed to respect and love mother earth. Each of us would have personally suffered the loss of a dear one or a job or something or someone we loved. And yet every New Year is a moment of celebration. A time to hope and dream!

The New Year reminds us too that the way ahead is full of uncertainties. This is the reason why we begin the year with prayer and blessing. It is important that we become a blessing for others – to each and every person we meet, starting with our family members, our friends, our colleagues, our church members, and our neighbours. It is a beautiful concept – you are blessed by God and you become God’s blessing to all, his voice of peace to all, show God’s love and care to all the people you will meet in your life. In short become a blessing (and not a curse). God’s heart is seen through your heart. Mother Mary was a blessing wherever she





went. She went to her cousin Elizabeth and brought her great joy. She went to the wedding feast of Cana and she brought joy when there was sadness. One good resolution for this year could be to become a source of blessing to all.

There is a beautiful incident that gives us a new perspective for this New Year – to become a blessing. Two of them were having a quiet drive in a taxi from the Grand Central Station. The passenger and the taxi driver were chatting and relaxing in the taxi. They were moving quite fast in the right lane when all of a sudden a big lorry jumped out of a parking space right in front of them. The expert taxi driver slammed on his breaks, the car skidded, the tires squealed and at the last moment the car stopped just one inch from the other lorry's back-end.

The driver of the lorry, the guy who almost caused a big accident, whipped his head around and he started swearing at the taxi driver who was on the right. He was using a lot of bad words. The most graceful thing happened the next moment. The taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy and just said: "Have a nice day my friend!" And he was so friendly.

The passenger seated behind could not believe what he was seeing and hearing. One guy makes a mistake and yells at the other who was innocent and smart, and all that the victim does is to smile and say nice words. So he said: "Why did you just do that!? This guy could have killed us!" And this is when the taxi driver told him what we can now call, 'The Law of the Garbage

Truck.' He said: "Many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it. And if you let them, they'll dump it on you."

"So when someone wants to dump on you, don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well and move on. Believe me. You'll be happier." How often do we allow garbage trucks run right over us? And how often do I take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home or on the street? It was then that he decided, "I don't want the garbage and I'm not going to spread it anymore."

The first important thing to do to become a blessing is to fill ourselves with the blessing of God. We give out what we are filled with. If we are filled with joy, we radiate joy. If we are filled with peace we spread peace. If we are filled with love, we give love. If we are filled with God, we give God. The first step to become a blessing is to fill ourselves with God and his graces. This begins with self-emptying and purification. The more we empty ourselves, the more God fills us with his grace. The first magic word is God.

Secondly, be a grateful person. The second magic word to become a blessing is gratitude. The more grateful we are the happier we shall be. Let us be grateful to God and to all those around us. If you want to be happy stop complaining and stop playing the blame game. As St. Paul says: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). A grateful life is a happy life!

Third, be a kind and loving person. Fill yourselves with the love of Christ. Let us fill ourselves with goodness and kindness. The joy within me will make me kinder and gentler and this will spread to others and I will be and become a blessing to others. Let us learn to give without expecting anything in return. The more I give the more I will be blessed. Let our prayer be: "Lord help me to make those around me live a happy and blessed life. Let me be a blessing for the people I will meet in my life!"

May this Year 2022 be a year of opportunities, hope, transformation, hard work, achievements and deep peace!

May we be a blessing to all!

