

# Pope on New Year's Day: Mary's motherhood teaches us humility, tenderness

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Vatican City, Jan 1, 2017 / 04:01 am ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- At the start of the new year, Pope Francis said that celebrating Mary, the Mother of God, highlights a beautiful aspect of our faith: that Mary is our mother too, and that by her example we can learn to practice virtue and self-sacrifice in our own lives.

“By her motherhood, Mary shows us that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong,” Francis said Jan. 1.

“To celebrate Mary as Mother of God and our mother at the beginning of the new year means recalling a certainty that will accompany our days: we are a people with a Mother; we are not orphans.”

Pope Francis celebrated Mass in St. Peter's Basilica for the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God Jan. 1, reflecting on the line in Luke's Gospel that says “Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

Despite everything that was happening in the days surrounding the birth of Jesus and after, Mary did not try to “understand” or to “master the situation,” the Pope pointed out, but instead, she treasured what happened, protecting and guarding “in her heart, the passage of God.”

“Deep within, she had learned to listen to the heartbeat of her Son, and that in turn taught her, throughout her life, to discover God's heartbeat in history,” he continued.

Mary does not say much in the Gospels, and she does not make any big speeches or perform amazing deeds, but what she does have, Pope Francis said, is “an attentive gaze capable of guarding the life and mission of her Son, and for this reason, of everything that he loves.”

“Where there is a mother, there is tenderness,” he said: the many shrines, images and chapels around the world dedicated to Mary remind us of this. And celebrating the Holy Mother of God reminds us that we are not orphans, that we all have a mother.

“To begin the year by recalling God's goodness in the maternal face of Mary, in the maternal face of the Church, in the faces of our own mothers, protects us from the corrosive disease of being ‘spiritual orphans,’” he said.

We experience this sense of being spiritually orphaned when we feel motherless and without the tenderness of God, the Pope noted, or when we feel like we don't belong to God's family. When this sense grows, it makes us more narcissistic and concerned with our own interests.

“It grows,” he said, “when we forget that life is a gift we have received – and owe to others – a gift we are called to share in this common home.”

But Mary, by comparison, “gave us a mother’s warmth,” he said. A “warmth that shelters us amid troubles, the maternal warmth that keeps anything or anyone from extinguishing in the heart of the Church the revolution of tenderness inaugurated by her Son.”

In our society, mothers are “the strongest antidote to our individualistic and egotistic tendencies, to our lack of openness and our indifference,” Pope Francis said. Mothers are capable of testifying to tenderness and self-sacrifice and hope in our society.

“Celebrating the feast of the Holy Mother of God makes us smile once more as we realize that we are a people, that we belong, that only within a community, within a family, can we as persons find the ‘climate,’ the ‘warmth’ that enables us to grow in humanity, and not merely as objects meant to ‘consume and be consumed,’” the Pope said.

“To celebrate the feast of the Holy Mother of God reminds us that we are not interchangeable items of merchandise or information processors. We are children, we are family, we are God’s People.”