



Endings and Beginnings

By Marge Loenser

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, who was the god of beginnings and endings. Interesting! As we end 2020, (thank you God) we begin 2021, and after slogging our way thru this past year, we look back to see that we have experienced challenges that we have never had before: in the practice of our faith, and in political, medical and social situations. We see our country left divided and we see that this pandemic has left us with much loss and sadness; it has curtailed our getting together to celebrate and our getting together to grieve; it literally has changed our societal habits completely! On the positive side we have learned to use technology to bridge the gap, for example we have Zoom and Face time. Who would have thought we would be celebrating mass from St. Mark's online? (and grateful that we could). God does provide for us!

We ask our Heavenly Father to bless this new year with hope and gratitude. We pray that the vaccine arrives and changes things so we can arrival at "normalcy" again!

This month starts out celebrating our Holy mother Mary as the mother of God. On the 3rd we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord – the visit of the three wise men. Among other saints this month we celebrate Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton. In 1774 she was born into a wealthy Episcopalian family; she married well and had five children, but she was left a widow at an early age. While visiting Italy she converted to Catholicism. She was the founder of Catholic schools in the United States. She is the patron saint for Catholic schools and loss of parents.

On the 21st we celebrate St. Agnes, virgin and martyr. At the age of thirteen, in the year 304 she was turned over to Roman authorities by suitors that she refused to marry and was murdered for her faith.

One of my favorite saints that we celebrate this month is St. Thomas Aquinas, a doctor of the church. As a Catholic school student how can I ever forget learning his “Tantum Ergo” and his “O Salutaris Hostia”. At 11 years of age, I could sing in Latin!!

Our day of prayer for the unborn falls on January 22. This will be a very special day for me as I recall that my brother Mickey and I attended the March for Life in D.C. together, many years ago. He recently passed away, but his goodness and love for family and church continues to inspire me and my family. Thank You Jesus for giving us Mickey, I know he is with You.

May God bless our new year. May we learn to turn to Him more and more. May we learn to be accepting and grateful. May God continue to bless our country, our church and our homes and families and may we enter the new year with hope renewed. Love, Marge



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