

2007

The first day of the year is not an ecclesiastic feast. It is a day among others in which the church has put two feasts: The Circumcision of our Lord Jesus, and the feast of St. Basil the Great. We celebrate the circumcision of the Lord as we celebrate all the events that he lived as a human. These events, in their accumulation and sequence, led him to death. As for St. Basil, he is one of the greats in theology, asceticism, episcopate, and social work; and he has, with no doubt, collected in his person all the virtues of the episcopate. He died in 479 at the age of 49.

And since we are going into a new year, we hope that it brings with it what makes us new in the eyes of God. Perhaps the image of circumcision benefits us here if we prevented the eye from seeing what harms it or see the ugliness of people, if we helped the ear not to hear what hurts chastity and also if we lived through a simple word in asceticism in order to become stain free and satisfy Christ.

We have the right, in addition to this internal peace, to ask for the peace of the world, in Lebanon first, in Iraq, Palestine and every land. War is burning around us, and we renew ourselves through asking for peace and health without forgetting the Lord's word: "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you". Moreover, we say that the common expression "your health is the most important thing in the world" is not right: your health comes after your struggle to reach holiness. The Lord didn't forbid us from seeking money, but he insisted that we should be cautious from money and afraid from its power over us. Nothing is forbidden for us as long as it is within the law.

Perhaps this is an occasion to remind the faithful that we have a divine liturgy on New Year's Day, so if we stayed up late in the night and spent it playing we shall not be ready to pray on the first of January. Perhaps some of you still gamble despite their poverty. This money should stay for the family and must be spent in the family or given for charity. These are the only reasons that justify our use of money. You are trusted over this money and it is a waste of money when you give it because of a playing card. Therefore, enter this new year trusting the Lord and give him your soul, your family, and Lebanon.

Renewal, for us, happens through the Holy Spirit and has nothing to do with days; however, renewal requires a huge effort because it is a common work between God and us given through his grace. Don't only rely on this grace but fight also. On the other hand, don't feel comfortable with your fight only but also ask for this grace. This is what we call sharing between God and you. This way, all your days shall be new.

As the civil year begins, begin your life with Christ if you were still slow until now. Do you have this determination? Do you love Christ? It is a building you should build. Read the bible at home; come to the liturgy; pray in the evening for you shall see that things changed inside you and around you. Then, these days shall become the peak of your renewal in Christ and the beginning of your journey towards him. Everything before that is just a calendar. Become a calendar that God turns and reads in a way that he finds in it every day something new and sees all your life new.

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