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PASTORAL LETTER – JANUARY 2021

Dear friend,

At the start of the New Year, we are dealing with a new variant to the coronavirus which is much more infectious than the original strain, according to *The New York Times*. Also, we are dealing with political unrest resulting from the attacks on the Capitol, and we are feeling concern about the distribution of the COVID vaccine.

Amid all of this, some of us may wonder if we are “listening to a broken record,” as the old saw goes, or reading “a new chapter, new verse, or just the same old story?”

In the face of these difficult moments, I would like to encourage you to not lose hope. Let us trust God and embrace the attitude that things can change. Our faith tells us that we can experience change, newness, and breakthroughs. The Apostle Paul once said the following words in a letter to a house church based in the Greek port city of Corinth: “*All who are in Christ, old things are passed away; see, everything is new.*” (See 2nd Corinthians 5:17.)

Paul's exhortation reminds us that we can individually change, if we have “oneness” with Christ. I personally believe that we have to internalize Christ's teachings and make them our own. When we do that, we will be motivated to look at life through a prism of optimism and hope, no matter what negativity or problem is swirling around us. We have to have faith that we can change.

Along with having faith in a better version of ourselves in 2021, we must have the desire to change. For Mother Teresa, this means that we must have the desire to consecrate our lives to God. She said, “*We must permit Him to work in us and through us with His power, with His desire, with His love. We must become holy not because we want to feel holy but because Christ must be able to live His life fully in us.*”

In fact, one of our New Year's resolutions should be to grow deeper. We cannot allow our societal events to distract us from our spiritual priorities and doing God's will.

G. K. Chesterton said, “*The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul.*”

May you continue to fulfill God's purpose in 2021, and may you continue to experience the personal change, reassurance, and freedom that comes from oneness in Christ, so that your life can continue to change for the better!

In Christian friendship,
Pastor Luis
