

Fr. Larry's Homily – January 1, 2008

Today as we begin the New Year, the second reading tells us what we need to do for this New Year. Everything is summed up in that. It says the spirit that God has given us, the spirit cries out within us, "Abba." We have the same spirit inside of us that Jesus Christ had inside of Him. Isn't that what this says? "As proof that you are sons God sent the spirit of His Son." So the same spirit in Christ Jesus is the same spirit inside of you and me. So that same spirit that cried out, "Abba, Father!" is the same spirit in Jesus Christ that called out "Momma" to his mother, Mary.

And so do we cry out, "Mary, Mother.?" Do we cry out, "God, Father.?" And the key to living a spiritual life in this year 2008 is the surrender of the Holy Spirit. It's to take your life and my life and completely surrender it. Because again nobody here, but some people I know sit there and believe that if they just do the right thing their Christian. If I go to Church on Sunday I'm a Christian. If I obey the commandments I'm a Christian. If I sit there and do all these motions I'm a Christian. That's a lie. And it's not the teaching of the Church. You could be an atheist and obey all the rules of the Catholic Church, could you not? You could go to daily Mass and be an atheist, could you not? You can do all those things; you can go through the motions and have no faith in God. You could be a Muslim, you could be a Jew, you could be anything you want and go through the motions and obey all the teaching of the Catholic Church, and yet not be a Christian. Going through the motions doesn't make any of us a follower of Jesus Christ. Obeying all the commandments doesn't do that.

So what God tells us in Galatians is that which makes us Christian, sons and daughters of the father, is the Holy Spirit. So the key to the spiritual life of course is to surrender to the spirit; to let God's spirit live in us and through us. Now when Mary did that, she became the Mother of God. She surrendered her life to the Holy Spirit. She didn't go through the motions of doing all the right things – she surrendered to the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit overshadowed her she conceived and she became the Mother of God.

We will not become the mother or father of God of course, that was once and for all. But we will become children of God. If you and I think year will stop just making the things, oh my new year's resolution, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that; I'm going

to do more things, oh I'll have fun. If you think that's what it's going to be to make you a Christian go for it, you're not going to listen to me anyway. But I'm telling you what you've got to do. This year, beginning today, you've got to fully surrender. I can't be a Christian in myself Lord, I don't have the power. Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding! First step. I surrender myself to you. Spirit of the living God this year and the rest of the years of my life You take control of my life. If you do that, this is liable to be a very peaceful year for you, because it will be God's spirit that runs your life and not your discipline and not your "trying harder". It's surrender, not pride.

May each of you know God's love and Mary's today and forever. Amen.