

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.’ The one who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (Revelation 21:1-5).

The image offered by this passage from *Revelation*, of the old order passing away and the new order emerging, plays out for us every year around this time in the classic image of the departure of Father Time and the arrival of Baby New Year. Father Time, wizened by the experiences of the past year - some good, some bad – hands off the human race to Baby New Year, whose future is full of uncertainty but also hope. In this classic changing of the guard, we are given another opportunity to reflect on our experiences over the past year, to celebrate the good, to learn from the bad, and to move forward into the new year with hope that, no matter what happened last year, we can and will make the new year better.

Newness is exactly what Christ came to bring. Through his life, death, and resurrection, he extends to us the gift of an ever new life, not just at the end of time, though that is the goal we are ultimately working toward, but right now. Right now, at the dawn of this new year, and in any and every moment, Christ offers us the chance for a fresh start, a clean slate, a new beginning. We are not doomed to repeat the mistakes of our past. We can choose a new, better life – we can choose the life of Christ and the peace, joy, and wholeness that it brings.

Father Time is exiting the stage. Baby New Year is arriving. And, as always, Christ is with us, offering us his gift of newness of life. Take it, and have a very Blessed New Year!