

#1Eugene

As the richness of New Year 2018 unfolds, we celebrate Mary, the Mother of God. One of the earliest titles given by Christians to the Blessed Virgin was the Theotokos—"God-bearer." We celebrate her as the Mother of God, because, in bearing Christ, she bore the fullness of the Godhead within her.

January is also traditionally the time for New Year's resolutions. It's an ideal time to evaluate, reassess, and recommit our lives for what we are called for in Jesus Christ. The start of a New Year gives us the feeling of a fresh start, a new beginning, and new ventures and opportunities. It is a time when we feel we can begin anew with our lives. Do we have the courage to let go of yesterday, grab hold of today? Do we have the confidence and trust in Jesus who made His promise to us: "*behold, I make all things new! Everything is about to change*"! (Rev. 21:6-7) As Jesus entrust us all to His blessed Mother for protection as we begin this year 2018, perhaps in our own way and with Mother Mary's help we may be courageous to say, **'Your Will be Done'**!

As faith community, I would like to invite you to adopt this resolution here in our community and family. I would like to introduce the **#1Eugene** resolution. What is **#1Eugene**? These are the initials based on the examples and values of Mary, in which it can help us to start the New Year 2018.

#1- Stands for our 1st priority.

E – stands for Engage. The vibrancy and dynamism of St. Eugene Parish is based in our individual and communal participation or involvement. I would like to invite and encourage each one of you to engage, to be involved in our parish life, be part of our various parish ministries and organizations. We have plenty! This is our parish, this is our spiritual home, be enriched by being part of it! Like our Mother Mary, she let herself be counted in the salvation plan of God and with her participation, the fulfillment of the promise was made the extraordinary event called Christmas.

U- stands for Unity. Our Parish is super blessed with the diverse traditions and cultures. We have Anglos, African Americans, Carribeans, Latin Americans, Central Americans, Asians and etc. Although we come from different parts of the world, with different skin color, backgrounds, features, we speak different languages, with different accents yet we gather together in the table of Lord in the Eucharist. In the Eucharistic Table all are ONE, we are United! Serving and praising One God, the source of everything we have and are! We are called to unite because united we stand, we can do a lot of things! Like Mary, she unites her plans with the great plan of God, letting go of her own plans that is why God blessed her all the more. Likewise, as we commence this year let us imitate Mary's attitude to unite our plans to the loving plan of God that we may be blessed like Mary.

G- stands for God. Put God always at the center of our lives! God comes first in all our dealings whether here in our church or in our individual families. Many of us here are members of our various Parish Ministries and Organizations. I thank you all for your generosity for contributing your time, talents and gifts to the life of our Parish and please, keep up the good ministry! We are involved in the ministry not because we want others to praise us or to praise ourselves, NO! We are part of the ministry because we want to give praise to God the source of our talents. Like Mary in Gospel of Luke, the Magnificat she said: "*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,*" or the other translation says: "*My soul magnifies the Lord.*" Mary never magnified herself, it is always the greatness of the Lord that she extols. Likewise, as we start this year 2018, let us magnify the Lord and not ourselves, let us also imitate the Yes of our Mother. Yes, to God first!

E- stands for Enthuse. When Mary received the Good News from the Angel that she will become the mother of the Son of the Most High, Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste. With much enthusiasm Mary cannot contain the joy within her, she was so passionate and driven to share the Good News. This New Year 2018, I would like you to imitate this enthusiastic spirit of Mary, be enthused about your Catholic Faith! Be interested in your faith!

N- stands for Nurture. Yes, we need to be enthused and bold with our Catholic faith, yet before that we have to nurture it first. We nurture our faith through the Sacraments, especially in the reception of the Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the life blood of our faith since it is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ, is truly, really and substantially contained in it. Bring your family to the Eucharist every Sunday! Another way to nurture our faith is to teach our kids how to pray the basic prayers such as Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be and then Holy Rosary. Pray together as a family before and after eating and etc. If your kids are not going to the Faith Formation classes take them, don't deprive them of this basic nutrition of our Catholic Faith. Find ways to nurture your faith. Like our Mother Mary, when she received the word of God she treasured all these words and pondered them first in her heart, which means she let the word of God grow and develop first in her life. Let's imitate her attitude.

E- stands for Evangelize. To evangelize is to tell and share the Good News. Like the shepherds in the gospel (*Luke 2: 16-17*), they went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message. As we start this New Year, let us resolve to be people who will make the message known, people who will tell and share the Good News of our Catholic Faith. Let us be bold with our faith. Our faith is not only confined and celebrated inside the four corners of this church, rather it is meant to be shared outside. Make known the message of life and love of God inside our homes, in our work places, in the people we meet every day. When we eat in the restaurant let us not be ashamed that we are Catholics by making a sign of the cross. This is our identity, this is our trademark! Be proud of being a Catholic in words and works. We have a choice: evangelize or fossilize!

Let's promote this hashtag **#1Eugene** in events and activities we have here at St. Eugene. Include it in your social media. Bearing in mind the meaning behind those initials. Happy New Year 2018!