

Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

January 1, 2011

St. Margaret Parish, Bel Air

Imagine for just a minute that your bank credits your checking account with \$86,400. The money is yours to do with whatever you want. The only catch is that the balance does not carry over to the next day. Whatever money you don't spend is lost. Whatever is left at the end of the day is simply deleted from your account. Then, the next morning your account is again credited with \$86,400. So, what would you do? My guess is that you would quickly discover more and more wonderful things to do with each new day's wealth. You would learn lots of creative ways to spend or give away every cent every day.

Okay, now let's get back to reality. If we do the arithmetic, we easily know that every day, we are given 86,400 seconds to live. God invests 86,400 seconds in each one of us every day. Every night, God writes off as loss whatever of this time we have wasted or not used well. There are no balances of time that get carried over from one day to the next. Time cannot be saved for a rainy day. Each day a new 86,400 seconds is poured into our account. Each night what remains is lost and gone forever. If we fail to make use of today's deposit, the loss is ours.

The lesson is that we have to spend our time wisely – a good lesson for New Year's Day. We need to spend our time on "things" that will hold their value from day to day, month to month, year to year. Regardless of our occupation or vocation, regardless of what we have to do day in and day out, we need to spend our time wisely. We can do this by:

Making the Scripture, the Eucharist, and personal prayer and reflection central in our lives as a way to grow closer to God, just as we see in the example of Mary in today's gospel;

Tending well the primary relationships in our lives, especially your spouse or close friend or parents or children;

Intentionally opening our minds and hearts to become more compassionate and more understanding of the situation and feelings of others.

If we spend our time on these "things," we will have no regrets. These "things" will hold their value. In fact, their value will increase and mean more and more to us as time passes. Someday we will look back on the time we spent on these "things" and say, "*That was time well spent.*" So, today

we begin a New Year – a new and significant segment of time. The question is: how will we spend our 86,400 seconds each day of this year?