

Father Michael's Musings
January 2025

The calendar changes from 2024 to 2025, and the New Year rings in with great hope for good health, prosperity, peace, and love. Though the Christian New Year begins in December, with the beginning of Advent, we join with the world in our prayers for a Happy New Year. One of the traditions that Christianity continued and adapted from our Jewish heritage is establishing January 1 as the Feast of the Circumcision, commemorating the bestowing of our Godly, name, character, and destiny.

To modern minds, circumcision is a quaint and seemingly unnecessary cosmetic surgery. To the Jews, it was the outward and visible sign of the unique relationship that they shared as the people of God, through whom His Name and blessing would flow into the world. That is why babies were named at the time of their Circumcision. They were formally introduced as a child of God and introduced to the responsibilities to God and to their neighbors that accompanied their new identity.

As the successor to Jews as the people of God, Christians don't mandate circumcision as the outward and visible sign of their inheritance under the New Covenant. We do, however, have Baptism as our sacramental heir to circumcision. At our Baptism, we are dedicated to our new name, character, and destiny. Traditionally, we also impose a baptismal name to mark the reception of our new identity.

It is very fitting that we celebrate the Feast of the Circumcision, when Jesus officially received His name, on January 1. We enter the New Year under the protection and blessings of His name and "baptize" the New Year to praise God, thank Him, and most especially become obedient to his great commandments. I hope we will all dedicate our 2025 to loving God with all our heart mind and strength and loving our neighbors as ourselves. I wish you a blessed New Year and hope you join us for services this year.

God bless you.

Father Michael