

## Start 2025 wisely

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek, then her own cheek. Finally, she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?" "Yes, sweetheart", he answered, "God made me a long time ago." "Oh", she paused, "grandpa, did God make me too?" "Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

We need to start **wisely**. It can be very difficult to change direction once we have begun. We need wisdom to choose and maintain love with a partner/spouse; wisdom raising children; wisdom to guide our work choices; wisdom choosing the right friends; wisdom managing our finances; wisdom using our time; wisdom eating the right things; wisdom exercising.

World leaders need wisdom bringing peace and good will among nations, especially in time of war.

How might we start wisely?

The 3 men were not called the 3 "intelligent" men. They were called the 3 "wise" men. They were wise because they gave Jesus gifts of **gold**, **frankincense**, and **myrrh**. Offer Jesus **gold**, **frankincense**, and **myrrh** at this Mass. Start the year 2025 with **wisdom**.

**Gold: Let Jesus lead:** We all lead some aspect of our lives. Sometimes successfully. Sometimes less so. We are not supposed to be the CEO of the universe though. Jesus led the most meaningful, loving, and wisest life. He is reigning now from heave. Jesus wants to lead your life in 2025. **Let Jesus lead:** in your job, as a parent, dating, in your marriage/partnership, your finances (tithing), at school, or with friends. There is a saying: "Surrender isn't giving up, it's giving over." Give Jesus gold. **Let Jesus lead** in 2025.

**Frankincense: Praise Jesus' sacrifice:** Incense signifies prayer. Eph. 5:2 says "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." God accepted Jesus's sacrifice on the cross as \*the acceptable\* sacrifice for our sins, "a fragrant offering". Mass is a sharing in Jesus' ONE acceptable and fragrant sacrifice. This is why Mass is so important. You are accepted and your life is made acceptable to God, through Jesus, at Mass. Don't be passive at Mass. Offer all your **praise**. Give Jesus **Frankincense**. Your praise brings God's acceptance.

**Myrrh: Die Jesus' death:** Myrrh signifies death. Death can sound scary. Dying Jesus' death is hopeful and transformational. Romans 6:3-4 says "all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death... in order that... we might live a new life." Baptised into Jesus' death means receiving power to break with sin, and power to start living a new life in the Holy Spirit. Picture, name, and give him your sins: addictions, anger, unforgiveness, and all that separates you from God. Give Jesus **myrrh (your sins): Die Jesus' death**. Live a new life in his Spirit!

The 3 wise men, "returned to their own country by a **different way**." After this Mass, return home by a **different way**. Live differently: get up 15 mins earlier to pray the bible/rosary; forgive and reconcile with someone; respond more lovingly to \*that\* annoying person; commit your relationships to Jesus;

The wisest thing we can do in 2025 is to help people encounter Jesus and come into a relationship with him. There's a saying: "The Church of Jesus Christ doesn't have a mission; the mission of Jesus Christ has a Church." It's not that the church \*has\* a mission. The Church \*is\* a mission. Our gifts to Jesus: **gold** to let him lead (our lives); **incense** to pray his prayer (of surrender); **myrrh** to die his death (to sin) \*is\* his mission for the parish to live a wise 2025.

## Prayer

Father, give me **wisdom** this 2025.

Jesus, I surrender control and **let you lead**.

Jesus, thank you that I am **acceptable** to God through you at this Mass.

Jesus, I give you my sins. **Put my sins to death**. Help me live a new life in your spirit.

May your wisdom inspire others to encounter you too, for the salvation of the world, and renewal of the church. Amen!