

Let us begin again! It's true, every day is a new beginning and I always say to myself, it is never too late to begin again. One month in the Year 2025 is gone. Not sure how things have unfolded for you all. For me, it has been good so far. I am sure many of us have made good plans and resolutions for the year. However, no one totally knows how things are going to unfold in life. Whatever ways life may unfold in coming days and months, never give into hopelessness and anxieties. Rather, trust in God and have hope in him. Because, the blessings and promises of God are true. We are reminded of it on the very first day of the year, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Number 6:24-26). Secondly, we are given Mary, the Mother of God as our model to follow and accompany us throughout the year. Mary, the Mother of God herself received blessings and also faced challenges of life. She never gave up her love for God but remained faithful to her first 'yes' throughout her life on earth.

The year may bring blessings and challenges in living out our Franciscan vocation or life in general. I would encourage you to hold on to your love for God and your Franciscan vocation. Live as best as you can, trusting in the Lord. Always be willing to look back to look forward. Go back to your first 'yes' - to your encounter with God and St. Francis of Assisi. That is the foundation one has to go forward in life, even if life may not go as planned.

This year the church celebrates the Jubilee-Pilgrims of Hope and as Franciscans, we are celebrating the centenary of the canticle of creatures. Take part locally as an individual or as a fraternity to celebrate these lifetime occasions. As pilgrims and strangers in this world we are offered these unique opportunities to renew our relationship with God and his creation. Dare to do something new in relation to God and creation. Little or in big ways, it's time to live in deeds our love for our Creator and his creation. Whatever you can do or dream to do, begin it. Your courage and trust in God, will pave the way forward for you. And also remember you may never know what results come from your actions, but if you do nothing at all, there will be no results. So, my brothers and sisters, **let us begin again!**