Collected New Year Poems and Prayers

2022

From the Wheaton Franciscans
The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
    To find the lost,
    To heal the broken,
    To feed the hungry,
    To release the prisoner,
    To rebuild the nations,
    To bring peace among others,
    To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

Ancient One
who makes
all things new,
may we receive with gentleness
and touch with hopefulness
and protect with fierceness
and love with tenderness;
and may we celebrate with gratefulness
and welcome with humbleness
and tend with gracefulness
all that you give into our care.

Jan L. Richardson ~ Night Visions
Prophets of a Future Not Our Own

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision.
We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise
that is God’s work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the
kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession
brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church’s
mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that
they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide
yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to
do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

This prayer was composed by the late Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John
Dearden in November 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom
of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled “The mystery of the Romero
Prayer.” The mystery is that the words of the prayer are commonly attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never
spoken by him. Pope Francis used the “magnificent” prayer in December 2015 in his Christmas address to the
Roman Curia.
Charting A Course During Uncertain Times

All I ask for is a world where we see the humanity in every face,
    Where we live by the principles, we claim to hold dear:

Love one another
Do to others as you would have others do to you
Turn the other cheek
Turn swords to ploughs
All people are created equal
Freedom of religion
Seek Justice
Be merciful and charitable
Forgive even your enemies
Live and let live.

Ten Principles.
Only ten.
How hard can it be?
It doesn’t take much to make me happy.
(Friends tell me I’m easy that way.)
    All I want is Peace on Earth,
Goodwill toward one another,
    Compassion and Mercy,
And above all, an abiding Love
as fearless and boundless

    as the expanding Universe

Poem by John Smelcer
Charter for Compassion ~ © 2019
https://charterforcompassion.org/charting-a-course-during-uncertain-times-2019
Patient Trust

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don’t try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

The Merton Prayer

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot
know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am
following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to
please You does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope
that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me
by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust You always though I
may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and
You will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton. OCSO
Prayer

Dear God,
Like the sunrise in the eastern skies,
the new year dawns before us.
I welcome this day, this year,
with an open heart.
Guide me to a place of peace,
where my mind is not
burdened with worry.
Ease me into this new year
and give me hope that
the year ahead of me is
brighter than the one behind me.
Amen.

https://www.franciscanmedia.org/pausepray/sunrise-in-2021

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again
Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.
- Author Unknown

https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/new-years-prayers
New Year's Prayer

As the dawn breaks on a new year,
let us give thanks for all we hold dear:
our health, our family, and our friends.

Let us release our grudges, our anger, and our pains,
for these are nothing but binding chains.

Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way.
Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, color, or creed.

Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts
and to chant God's name each day.

Let us lead the world from darkness to light,
from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right.

Let us remember that we are all one,
embracing all, discriminating against none.
May your year be filled with peace, prosperity, and love.
May God's blessings shower upon you
and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy, and peaceful new year.

- Rev. Marcy Sheremetta

God, thank you for a new year. May everyone in our family be willing to begin anew with a clean slate. We know that you are always ready to forgive us. Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.

As we begin a new year, remind us of our truest values and our deepest desires. Help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do. Help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now, one day at a time.

Help Us Enter the New Year

God of all time, help us enter the New Year quietly, thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others, mindful that our steps make an impact and our words carry power.

May we walk gently.

May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year reverently, aware that you have endowed every creature and plant, every person and habitat with beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness.

May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls, help us enter the New Year joyfully, willing to laugh and dance and dream, remembering our many gifts with thanks and looking forward to blessings yet to come.

May we welcome your lavish love.

In this new year, may the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in the days ahead.

- Vinita Hampton Wright