

Sr. Mary Ellen McAleese – Reflection for the New Year (*January 1, 2017*)

Scripture: Isaiah 32:15-18; Philippians 4:6-9; John 15:9-12

Good morning and Happy NOW Year – 2017.

How many times have you heard or said
Happy New Year in the last 24 hours?
... during your life time?

Has it always sounded the same –
Has it always meant the same?

I'd like to say it again on this morning of January 1, 2017 ... and say it to each of us gathered here regardless of our age ...

Happy NEW Year!!

There are two events repeated every year – starting about mid-November ... sprinkled a little into Advent – and then re-appearing as we get closer and closer to New Year's Eve ...

... our liturgical calendar presents us with “the end-of-time” readings ... some pretty gruesome details.

... and our society usually has a few fanatical groups that proclaim LOUD and CLEAR – “the end is near or here” ... get ready!!
(this year has been no exception)

Driven by fear, some gather supplies of
water, flashlights, food, petro ... some revamp their houses ...
making sure all they have is secure ...

... some even perform additional or radical religious disciplines ...

All in order TO BE READY!!

When it comes to the liturgical calendar we are dealing with a lot more than ourselves ... be with it as you want.

But we can influence society and the world around us by our own life choices ...

Seeking to let ONLY GOOD come into our
choices and the same for what
goes out with our thoughts ...

As we CELEBRATE this NEW year ... please allow me to offer a few familiar reflections ...

Being ready / being prepared is good advice!

Whether it comes from Jesus' words "be ready for the master's return" or the Girl Scout's motto "Be prepared".

Questions that arise from this advice "Be ready" ...

... Questions I'm almost sure all of us have asked of ourselves ... or others have asked of us ... or we have asked others ...

What would I do if I knew this really was my

LAST YEAR ... LAST DAY ... LAST HOUR ... LAST TIME WITH YOU

We've given / heard a wide range of responses to this WHAT IF ...

"take my family on that long overdue trip"

"call my mom and tell her 'I love you'"

Regardless of the answer, the next advice to give ourselves is:

DO IT!!

Why wait??

NOW is all we can be sure of ... NOW is the only time we have – regardless of our age.

There will never be a more perfect time than NOW!

As Emerson once wrote, "You cannot do a kindness too soon – for you never know how soon it will be too late" ...

So in this NEW year may we make the best of each NOW ...

May we seek to be as consciously present to whomever / whatever is in our presence.

Today, we observe World Day of Peace –

PEACE which we also experience one moment at a time ...

Throughout today's Scriptures from Isaiah, Philippians and John ... we find many facets of PEACE for our pondering prayer.

... justice ... quietness ... safe dwellings ... peaceful environment

... prayer and supplication with anticipated thanksgiving

... an invitation to abide in God's love and joy as we love one another

Our prayerful pondering will nourish our peaceful lives ...

And whether we read it from holy ones like Hildegard, Thomas à Kempis, Buddha, our own Frances, or Mother Teresa,

or we sing it out in today's familiar songs.

The truth is the same
Peace begins with me – NOW
Peace comes from the INSIDE OUT!

Rather than a lot of New Year's resolutions maybe we can have a communal INTENTION for 2017 ...

... our intention is to use every moment to make 2017 a NOW year ...
(just imagine how NEW that experience will be!!!)

Please join me in these closing affirmations

... HAPPY NOW YEAR ...

God of Mystery ...

We know you have been with us in the PAST

AMEN

God of Mystery ...

We trust your promise to be with us in the FUTURE

AMEN

God of Mystery ...

We desire to recognize You in the NOW that we call the PRESENT

AMEN

God of Mystery ...

May we see you

May we be you

AMEN