

ASCENDING LIFE-CANADA

Spiritual Journey Resource Jan/Feb 2015

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015

BLESSING FROM POPE FRANCIS

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift you up and give you peace.

Book of Numbers

**Pope Francis invites us to entrust our hearts to Mary
and see her as a messenger of hope for the year ahead.**

Let her example of humility and openness to God’s will assist us to transmit our faith in a “joyful” proclamation. Let the words of strength encouraging hope accompany us on our journey of faith, the desires of our hearts, our needs and the needs of the whole world, especially of those who hunger and thirst for justice and peace.

WORLD DAY OF PEACE

Pope Francis’ Message

“Fraternity is the foundation and pathway of Peace, that stems from conviction that we are “all” children of one God and are part of the same human family sharing a common destiny”. We are reminded not to allow ourselves to be indifferent and immobile and to acknowledge the violence and injustice present in many places around the world.

“Let us work to build a society of solidarity and one that is “truly, more Just”, he urges.

**Let us begin at home, in our families, our parishes, our various faith organizations
and those serving the hungry and thirsty.**

Let us pray for the gift of Peace and the ability to spread it everywhere.

Let us ask the Lord to “loosen the heart of man, the heart of humanity.”



THOUGHT TO PONDER

World—Is Peace Possible in our Time”

Our most common link is that we all share this small planet.

We all breathe the same air.

We all cherish our children’s future.

We are all mortal.



Let us examine a speech by President John F Kennedy six months before his death that changed History.

“Let us seek a genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life worth living.”

***Can we again imagine a world, as we did once 50 years ago when we treated one another with dignity,
conscious of our differences, but committed to Peace?”***

**Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts. Peace is a process.
History teaches us that enmities between nations, as between individuals does not last forever.**

So let us persevere. Let us labor on towards a strategy of peace.

Let us do our part to build a world of peace, where the weak are safe and the strong are just.

Those very words are as relevant today as in his time.

As Pope Francis urges

“Let us ask the Lord to “loosen the heart of man, the heart of humanity.”

January 2015

GOD HAS SENT HIS SPIRIT INTO OUR HEARTS.

(Galatians 4:4-7, Luke:2:16-21)

**As we begin a New Year, let us remember that Christmas is not just a date on a calendar,
but, the start of a whole new way of life.**

PRAYER

Welcome God

Creator God and Lord of us all, you desire what is good for us.

So, it is with grateful hearts we give you thanks for this time of sharing and prayer.

**Your presence is made real among us in the living faces that surround us,
in the warm embrace of our welcoming host/hostess,
and in the love of this community of faith gathered in your name.**

**Guide us this day as we break open your word with the hope
and desire that it will enrich our life more than gold or silver.**

In Jesus' name, we pray:

Amen

GOSPEL

MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

Searching for God in the World

Luke 2: 16-21

They found Mary and Joseph and the Infant

Galatians 4: 4-7

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

We focus on the Holy Family and although we know no human family is perfect, it often is through our imperfections that we are called to be holy.

Forgiveness defines what it means to be a Christian. Forgiveness is what the mystery of Jesus Christ is all about. Forgiveness is what we all need and when it is offered can make us all *holy families*.

- ***Share an experience of forgiveness that has taken place in your family.***
- ***What continuing differences has that made?***

LIFE FOCUS

We reflect upon the potential for all families to be called holy and on forgiveness as a path to that holiness.

- **What is it about your family life that you are really proud of?**
- **Share how a significant experience has defined that it means to be family for you.**

RESPONSE IN ACTION SUGGESTIONS

- * **During the Christmas season many families get together. If during that time you have felt distant from or had a disagreement with a relative, reach out to him/her now and do what you can to mend the relationship.**
- * **Reach out to a group that supports families in crisis, such as an emergency shelter for women and children. Offer your help or financial assistance.**

PRAYER

Spirit of God

Create in us hearts, open to fostering virtue in our families.

When judgemental, give us heart-felt compassion.

When intense and lacking in joy, give us gentleness.

When “our way” is the “only way”, give us humility.

When difficult personalities test us, give us patience.

When our faults or the faults of others make themselves visible, give us forgiveness.

When sarcastic words are ready and eager to be spoken, give us kindness.

Above all, give us a love so great that anything that diminishes family life and friendship will never find a welcome in the hearts of those we call family and friends.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen





FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

“Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.” Psalm 72

The great showing forth of divinity meant to be unveiled for all.

We reflect upon what spiritual mind-set was needed from these foreign seekers to go forth in search of a reality far beyond their comprehension.

PRAYER

Dear God, you have graced our lives with many *Magi-cal* people and moments.

Too often we have overlooked them, unaware that you choose to make your presence known in human epiphanies. We have often limited our family, our universe, to those with whom we are comfortable, those who agree with our perceptions and philosophies.

Help us to embrace the stretching that comes with following your star into unlikely places with unusual people.

Let us understand that you really do want nations to walk by your light that infuses us and enlightens us when we choose to walk even with *magi-cal* strangers.

GOSPEL Matthew 2: 1-2 Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

We focus of three foreign men who were open to a universe they could not master, to a star they could not deny, and intuitions that they knew without doubt to follow. Their awareness was keen; as was their delight in what they found. The precious gifts were mere gestures of their greater gifts of seeing, believing and adoring.

- ***Describe a time in which you knew without any doubt that God was calling you to change your path or direction.***

LIFE FOCUS:

Consider how well do we recognize epiphanies, *manifestations of God's presence and action*, within our own lives. We are urged to openness in following new paths or in recognizing the simple ways in which God reveals himself to us and recognizing a plan that does not appear to be *of God*.

May we recognize the spiritual movements within our lives and increase our awareness of God in all things.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIONS AND CONVERSATION

- * **What are helpful ways in which you practice spiritual awareness, or how do you discern whether you need to make a change within your life?**
- * **What spiritual truths have you learned from people who are different than you?**

Solemn Blessing

May God, who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light pour out in kindness his blessing you and make your hearts firm in faith, hope and charity.

AMEN

And since in all confidence you follow Christ, who today appeared in their world as a light shining in darkness, may God make you, too a light for your brothers and sisters.

AMEN

And so when your pilgrimage is ended, may you come to him whom the Magi sought as they followed the star and whom they found with great joy, the Light from Light, who is Christ the Lord.

AMEN

**Roman Missal- the Epiphany of the Lord
Quest, Fall 2014**

