

A Prayer for the New Year

“For I know the plans that I have for you,' says the LORD, 'plans for your welfare, and not for calamity, to give you hope and a future.” ~*Jeremiah 29:11*

As we begin this New Year, the direction we turn will determine how it shall unfold. We must, whoever we are and wherever we are, at some point come to realize that God's plans and God's direction are high above any other plan we might make. In having that realization, we can now walk forward in confidence knowing that no matter the good or bad things which occur in this new year, we will be fine, for God is Emmanuel, God is with us.

What this means is that we can begin this wonderful new year by believing in Someone higher and more wise than ourselves. It is full of things we have never seen, that have never happened before. When we make this choice, we will find blessing and understanding far beyond all that we ever saw last year.

Many of this generation do not have the personal walk with God that he is ready to take. They believe in concepts generated by men and women out of their limited understanding. They don't see the divine, and only believe in what they can see, touch, or attain on their own.

The problem with this approach is that it only goes so far. So what do we do when we get to the end of our rope? There is nothing else there, unless God is there to reach out his hand and lead us safely forward.

Our nation and world need a return to the faith of our fathers and mothers, to days when the crops were laid by so the family could go to church. We must find the faith which loves God more than anything, and loves our neighbor as ourselves.

Perhaps this new year we could pray the prayer which make it miraculous and magical. Maybe this new year we begin to think of God first, others second, and ourselves last.

What does this mean for our families? First of all, it means that the first place we go on Sunday is church. We pass laws that businesses and sports activities do not happen on Sunday. We elect people to office who believe in the God who walked with the founders of our country. And we pray daily to the God who walks with us everywhere we go.

Peggy Horton lifts up this prayer. “As the old year retires and a new one is born, we commit into the hands of our Creator the happenings of the past year and ask for direction and guidance in the new one. May He grant us His grace, His tranquility and His wisdom!”

Committing past, present and future every day will give us direction and hope. As children we always needed the hand of our mother or father, someone who knows more and is

stronger, who knows where home is and where we need to go. When we grow up we still need that, and God is the one to provide this and more.

St Francis of Assisi, born just a hundred years after Christ, in 1181 A.D., wrote a prayer that can take us to new heights in this new year.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

This prayer in the first half takes faith to a new level. In this idea of using difficult moments for God to grow and share our faith, we find that we really can make a difference in this world. We find that God uses all things for his and our good.

In the second half, we learn that life is not about what we can find, but what we can give.

Reread the prayer, and make it a model for how you live in this coming year.

Write your own prayer. Let it begin with thanking God for what is. Move on to trusting in his ability to make all things new. Conclude with the things you promise to do differently. Pledge to embrace the spiritual, life-changing, eternal God who created you and walks with you daily.

And show it all by being in church, and showing your family this God in whom you trust.