

January 1, 2009 – Feast of Mary Mother of God
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Numbers 6: 22-27	God speaks to us as he spoke to Moses blessing us and giving us peace
Ps. 67: 2-3,5,6,8	God guides all peoples equally through growth and infinite diversity
Galatians 4: 4 – 7	Through Christ's birth all are children of God.
Luke 2: 16 – 21	The shepherds find Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger

I feel as though I am living in a time warp. It is October 2008 as I write these reflections for January 1, 2009. The U.S. economy becomes more depressed each day, and thousands of people are losing their jobs or are in financial dire straits. The plight of the homeless and very poor becomes more critical in this current free fall. Meanwhile we anxiously await an election that most of us realize will be critical to possibilities for a recovering, more creative future in our country and around the world. I am invited to fast forward my heart, mind and spirit to January 1, 2009. We are all invited to hope!

Today we celebrate the beginning of a New Year on earth and as we do our Scriptures offer us a future full of hope. They remind us of our longest, deepest connection with our ever-creating, loving God who accompanies us throughout the history of humankind.

The book of Numbers reminds us that God speaks to us as he spoke to Moses blessing us and giving us peace. The responsorial psalm sings of the ways God guides all peoples equally through our growth and infinite diversity. This is the God who gives life; the God we praise; the God who guides us. But we often lose our way from this more distant, though ever-present God.

Galatians brings the story of God's accompaniment of humankind much closer to us in the promise of a child, born of woman so filled with God's spirit that he, and we after him, would be able cry out "Abba" – father/mother, as adopted children of God! Luke, then in his wonderful recounting of the infancy narratives tells us more of this child, born of Mary. The outcast shepherds somehow recognized this child as the one promised in the long dreams and oral traditions of their ancestors. It is this Jesus, grown son of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter, who provides the blueprint for living a life that is just, forgiving and compassionate. He is indeed for all Christians the Prince of Peace, and the loving brother of all peoples.

How can we not entrust all our dreams and hopes to a God of such great love! A New Year has begun again, and for us in the United States a new presidency is about to begin. More than ever we are challenged as a people to live out the dream of our all-loving God, embodied so fully in Jesus. There is no limit to our challenge, no end to possibilities.

All we need is the openness to recognize our interconnectedness with all of creation, with every creature, with every woman, man and child. And then wherever we are and whatever our circumstances we can foster peace and nonviolence in our life and

work with one another in families, neighborhoods, cities, states and nations around the world. We have the skills we need. The time is now to trust that what God wants to do in us has already emerged in the unfolding of the universe, and for us Christians in the birth and lived example of Jesus. We celebrate a New Year, a new beginning, realizing in hope that each moment is a new revelation of God's loving presence empowering us as daughters and sons of God.

As our New Year begins think of one thing you, your family, your neighborhood can do to help create a future of fairness, kindness, inclusiveness, nonviolence, PEACE! The convergence of this feast of Mary, Mother of God, the celebration of a New Year and the inauguration of our new president in the United States gives us a triple invitation to respond to the call of the poor and homeless wherever we are, to welcome the stranger, to work to alleviate suffering, of children especially, all over this land and our world.

Look around! Listen! Respond today!

For more information:

As we wrap up our 2008 elections project we encourage all to consider our educational work as just beginning. It is important to put our concerns for people living in forgotten communities around the globe before President-elect Obama and the new House and Senate. Read Maryknoll's important policy goals outlines in "Loving our neighbor in a shrinking world" and schedule an appointment with your new representatives today.

Email for a copy, or find the election guide here:

www.maryknollogc.org/2008elections/index.htm

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