

Prayer for Tomorrow's Promise

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MISSION LEADER

NOTE: For this prayer service, it is helpful to have notecards and pens so that participants can write their thoughts during the pauses.

INTRODUCTION

We often like to think of the new year as a new beginning. Its story hasn't yet been written, and the year ahead is full of hope and possibilities. We make resolutions, promising ourselves that we will do — and be — better than last year.

The late Sr. Mary Roch Rocklage, a Sister of Mercy and an iconic health care leader, was well-known for saying, "God made you who you are because he thought you'd enjoy it."

As we enter into this space together, you are invited to bring all your hopes and dreams to the year ahead and carry along your experiences of the past year. It has helped to form and lead you to who you are today.

FIRST READING

"You formed my inmost being; You knit me in my mother's womb. I praise You, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works! My very self You know.

My bones are not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, fashioned in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw me unformed; in Your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be." (Psalms: 139:13-16)

FIRST REFLECTION

How incredible is it to consider that God, who created the world, delights in each of us, and specifically, in you. Take a moment to imagine God relishing that you exist — not because of your accomplishments or what you contribute to the world — but exulting in you because God is simply overjoyed that you are you.

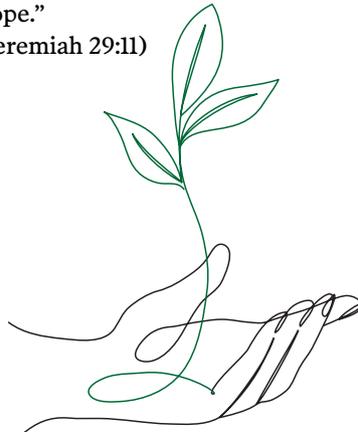
(Pause)

Consider the year that has just passed. You are not the same person as you were then. There have been moments of incredible joy and deep sorrow. The experiences of this past year have helped to form you, and God was present through every moment. Take a few minutes to remember, examine and observe within yourself what the year has been. As you do, write on one side of your notecard how it has shaped you.

SECOND READING

"For I know well the plans I have in mind for you — oracle of the Lord — plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope."

(Jeremiah 29:11)



SECOND REFLECTION

As we look to the year ahead, we bring all that has shaped us today. We look with joy and excitement, anxiety and uncertainty, and with steadfast faith that God has never left our side and will remain our guide and strength.

Although this year's story is still unwritten, its outline may be clear in our imagination. We already possess our expectations for what "will be," and we are planning how to bring it forth. On your notecard, write your hope and expectations for the year ahead.

On your notecard, you have a story of the past that has formed you and your future dreams. Let us take this moment to lift our pasts and our intentions for the year ahead to God.

CLOSING PRAYER

God, You are ever present with us. You held us this past year — cheering when we were filled with joy and lifting us when our strength was not enough. We ask that You guide and direct our steps in the year ahead. Teach us to be more fully the people You created us to be, the people in whom You delight. Help us to serve with our complete selves, joyfully, humbly and eagerly. With each step, unfold for us a future that brings us closer to You. Amen.

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