

Happy New Years Eve!

T. S. Eliot writes, "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time"

On this day of our Christmas Feast we stand on the edge of a new year. New Years Eve always seems to have a built in sense of anticipation... "What does the next year bring?"

There is great beauty to this anticipation, particularly after such a difficult year.

I would like to encourage you to embrace the grace for this next great leap into the future, while also holding space for the grief you may feel. This tension is healthy and right as we find ourself likely reflecting in the midst of this transition.

During the Celtic feast of Winter Solstice this day celebrated something that has made its way into our culture. It was traditional for the Celts to harvest mistletoe growing from the ancient oak trees in the forest and hang it over the front door. This act was seen as a cleansing ritual. It was accompanied by a blessing of the home believing it washed the home from any evil that might have been brought in during the year.

While we may not follow these same practices, there is depth to the symbol of cleansing our home. This year has brought with it tragedy, loss, and pain which many of us carry on a daily basis, to varying degrees. I am not suggesting the Divine wishes to magically replace these feelings with a sense of superficial happiness. Rather, I believe God desires to wash over us with the grace and mercy we need so that we might heal well. In these healing moments we are reminded that regardless of the pain we feel, Love is with us at every turn.

Like an infinite waterfall, mercy is eternally pouring, always filling an empty space. Much in the same fashion, Grace fills every corner of the universe. Like water always falls and pools up in the very lowest places, mercy does the same.

I have found it can be helpful to sit for a few moments and allow grace and mercy to wash over me. Often I will use a particular phrase to help me focus during this time of reflection and prayer.

I might suggest you use the following prayer, written by Fr. Thomas Keating.

God's love is living itself in me. I am aware of love living itself in me.

God's love is living itself around me. I am aware of love living around me.

God's love is living itself in others. I am aware of love living in others.

As we make the transition to 2021 we move into the new year surrounded by the presence of God. You cannot *not* live in the presence of God.

God is with us. Amen.

Grace and Peace,
Joel Everson