

January 2025

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.



Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

We live in hope

Responding to our sacred call in the new year

The beginning of a new year always holds potential – an opportunity to reflect on the year that has just concluded, build on past successes, learn from mistakes, and resolve to live with greater commitment and integrity in the year to come.

This month's Sunday readings provide particular wisdom upon which to reflect as we begin 2025. Listen carefully, and you will hear how precious we are in the eyes of the Lord and how deeply we are called to live as God's holy people in the world. We might even say that God *counts* on us to do this. We are to be light in darkness, bring healing to those who suffer, and share compassion, justice, and hope with all people. With such a sacred call, where do we begin?

Place your hope in the Lord. Pope Francis has announced 2025 as a Jubilee year with a central message of *hope*. Jubilee, or Holy, Years invite us to embrace reconciliation and be renewed in faith. "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future way bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope." (Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025) .

Be mindful to give God glory in your words and actions. Reach out to others with love and care; be a peacemaker at home, office or school, and in the world. Anything that wouldn't be pleasing to God? Let go of it, stop it, learn to avoid it!

Make 2025 "the year of our Lord." The letters A.D., which sometimes follow the numerical year are an abbreviation for "Anno Domini," or "year of our Lord." Make Jesus the Lord of your life and trust in God to be with you through all the circumstances you may experience this year. Turn to God in prayer as you face decisions, even little ones. Draw on Church teaching or a trusted friend or spiritual advisor when making more complicated ones.



Make this year glow with love and hope

Remember that every day is a gift. Thank God for each new day and resolve to spend time wisely and well.

Don't sell yourself short. You have a mission, a purpose, which only you may fulfill. In the words of John Henry Cardinal Newman, "God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next."

Make 2025 truly special, a year in which you live as the Lord's very own hopeful person in the world and share the hope of Christ through caring and sharing, in word and deed.

Like the Magi, open your gifts before the Lord.

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

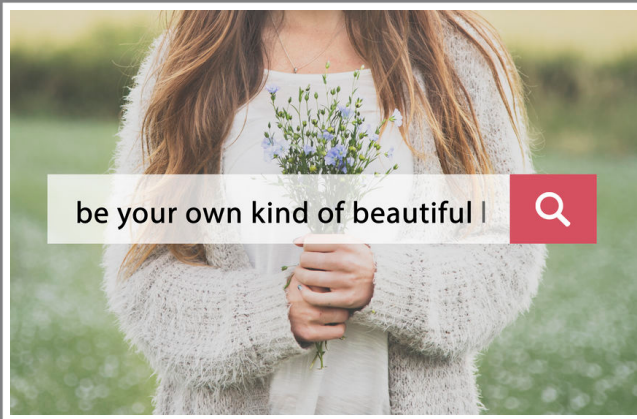
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The Magi traveled great distances to bring their gifts to Jesus. Their gifts were chosen carefully and were presented with awe and homage to the Christ-child.

We may not have to travel far to offer our gifts, yet like the Magi, each of us, too, should choose carefully and wisely how we will offer our gifts to Christ through our presence, service, caring, and sharing, giving glory to God who has entrusted the gifts to us.

We do not know how the Magi determined what gifts they would bring, nor who would bring which gift. We do know that they did not all bring the same gift, and somehow each must have felt compelled to give precisely the gift he did.

As we begin a new year, learn from the Magi. Like the magi who sought out the Christ-child in order to offer him homage and bring precious and unexpected gifts, each of us has something special to give, not only at Christmas. Every day holds an opportunity to share as only you can.



Recognize your gifts: faith, the blessing of family and friends, your talents and possessions.

Seek out the Lord in the poor, the homeless, and those who have no one to care for them.

Remember that all we are and have are truly gifts from God, to be cared for and shared with love. This is the real meaning of stewardship, for this season and throughout all time.

Each of us has something special to offer as we respond in gratitude for our many blessings. Each has something special to give - a particular combination of talents, strengths, gifts, and blessings along with things we are passionate about.

In his letter to the Church in Corinth, St. Paul tells us that we are called by Christ to fulfill varying roles and responsibilities. Like the body that cannot function well if one of the parts if one is hurt or absent, something is missing if any of us fail to put our gifts at the service of others, in our parish, local town or city, and in the world.

The Christmas story would not be the same without the shepherds and angels, Magi and saints. Like them, we too have something special to give. In being good stewards of our lives and our gifts, we may touch others in lasting ways, and in doing so our lives will change as well. In giving and receiving, we find hope in Christ's presence.

Do whatever he tells you

You just might experience a miracle!

When I read the story of the miracle at Cana, I often reflect on the servers who were working behind the scenes of the wedding feast. What must they have thought when Mary came to them with her directive, "Do whatever he tells you." Some Scripture scholars think that Mary might have been a family member of one of the wedding party – otherwise, why would she have been so concerned that they were running out of wine (which would have been a social disaster for the new couple)? Even if she was, however, the servers might have been perplexed by her request. After all, what could Jesus possibly do about the situation? Yet, they did as Mary instructed, and were the first to experience a miracle at Jesus' hands. The large water jars were filled with wine. Not only wine, but the best wine. Through this miracle, we see how deeply God wants to be near to us in our human state, and how Christ pours out God's love lavishly, abundantly. Are you ready to respond to Mary's directive in your life? Do whatever the Lord tells you. You just might experience a miracle! - Leisa Anslinger

Impact this month

Make 2025 a year of faith, hope and love.

FAITH

Open your heart and mind to a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, sacrament of Reconciliation and times of prayer.

HOPE

Grow in gratitude for the many blessings that bring a sense of hope and promise to your life. Allow your spirit to be renewed when hope wanes by being attentive to the signs of hope around you.

LOVE

Share the hope and love of God with family, friends, co-workers, and especially those who are most in need of care.