



A Blessing for the New Year

We have all quietly stepped over the invisible threshold, the old slipping away into last year and the new presenting herself before us, waiting.

In the turning of the year, no one is immune, no one is over-looked or left out. We are in this together.

And so we begin another year-long journey, bags packed whether we realize it or not. If we don't pay attention, those self-packing bags tend to fill up heavy with burdens we don't need.

Today, take a peek into your bag. What do you see on top?

Do you see shame tucked in on the side?

Is comparison hiding in the zipped up pouch?

Is fear rolled up tight and heavy on the bottom?

Recognize what is making your own pack feel heavy and consider replacing those items today. There are lighter bundles to bring along.

Like courage, laughter, creativity, and love.

And so as we slowly return to our work and to our routines we find things to be piled just as we left them.

Perhaps you are tentatively carrying a new energy as you face your tasks but you suspect it won't last long.

Push away dark thoughts of defeat.

You don't have to conquer a whole year at once.

Start small. Celebrate progress.

Turn down the future's invitation trying to pull you into anxiety.

Say no to the past's whispers dragging you into regret.

Refuse to rehearse your failures again. Remember you don't need those anymore.

Accept the invitation of Jesus who lives with you in this moment, inviting you to be present, to be loved, and to be fully yourself.

O God, remind us that ultimately, You are the clarity we long for, the answer we need, and the confidence we seek.

No matter how things turn out, *You are our surest resolution.*

As we stand on tip-toe and allow our eyes to gaze into the future of what might be, give us the assurance that you are with us in what is right now.

You always stand between us and every possible future.

Dear new year, be gentle with us, we pray.