

A new year, a new letter

The month of January arrives with the ending of holidays, new diaries to be organised, strategic plans to be initiated and the inevitable struggle to honour and sustain our new year resolutions.

Joan Chittister osb, however reminds us that:

Life is not meant to be a series of resolutions designed to make us someone we're not. It's meant to be a series of explorations which, in the end, finally bring us home to ourselves. 'The life is short' Hippocrates says, 'the craft is long to learn... It's easy to bounce through life – going here, trying that, tasting this. What is difficult is trying to figure out what we are supposed to do with what we find, or learn from where we go what will make life even richer. For ourselves, of course. But also for the rest of the world, as well (The Art of Life. 2012. 7-8).

A new year invites us to continue this personal journey. To learn from those around us, to appreciate the gifts we have been given, to find the beauty in the everyday of life and to seek ways to make our world a better place.

St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians reminds us that our lives are letters – gifts to our world.

You yourselves are our letter written on our hearts, known and read by everyone... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human heart (2 Cor 3:2-3).

Writing about letters, Macrina Wiederkehr suggests that *letters are stories of our souls ... sources of inspiration, teaching ... dreams and yearnings, gratitude and delight ... (A Tree Full of Angels, 1990. 105).* We can all remember opening letters, emails, cards or notes with anticipation of news from friends and family. Letters bring connection and convey love, care and concern. Letters are exciting and eagerly anticipated. Letters can bridge times of isolation or loneliness. Letters allow us to send best wishes in good times and bad.

To be a letter in our world is a challenge to all of us to be people who radiate God's love to those we meet. We are indeed God's love letter to the world. In this new year we have the opportunity to be letters of inspiration, guidance, gratitude and love to those with whom we live and work. To be the note of encouragement, congratulation or hope. To use our lives as living messages of God's compassion and mercy.

At this year's beginning, Chittister osb asks us to take the time to consider: *What is really important in life? The answer is only life itself, living it well, immersing it in beauty, love, and reflection* (Joan Chittister: *Essential Writings*, selected by Mary Lou Kownacki and Mary Hembrow Snyder).

May 2023 bring us opportunities to enrich our world through our lives, our service and our commitment to others.



Reflection: What letter are you writing in your life and work?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.