A New Start for a New Year

(If you are using this reflection with a group, you may wish to invite those attending to bring a symbol of the “gift” each one brings into the New Year, and place these so each one can see them. Light a new candle.)

Leader: For many in the Good Shepherd world, the New Year and January is bathed in sunshine and heat, for others, cold and snow signal a different climate. And for others living and working in equatorial areas it is hot and steamy all the time!

Living with our daily realities can mean that we do not always appreciate a New Start, a New Year! This reflection invites you to take time, wherever you live, whatever you do, to reflect on the coming of a New Year – 2015. And to contemplate the coming of change!

A New Year invites us to a reflection on what has passed, what has happened in the “old” year – personally, at community level, nationally and internationally:

As the “old” Year departs…

Leader: Take a few moments to reflect on these questions:
What do you regret about 2014?
What are you grateful for from 2014?
What do you wish - for yourself and your work - in 2015?
What gift do you bring with you into this New Year?

Share with each other the significance of the symbol you have brought.

A Prayer to welcome the New Year

Together: God of Life and Hope
We come into this New Year with energy and optimism.
We know that this year will present us with challenges and difficulties.
It will also present us with opportunities and insights.
Guide us in all that we do so that we may live the mission of Good Shepherd as fully as we can.

Reader: We know that many in our world enter this New Year in fear and anxiety for themselves and their families and communities. War, conflict, storms, floods, abuse... each of us carries scars and emotional pain. Recall the places and people you know who are facing fear, are anxious, and in need of your support...

Leader: You are invited to offer a prayer for them:  (voice your prayer here)

Reader: God of Hope, we pray for each person, that this New Year will bring them the courage, strength and hope they need. We pray for ourselves, that we may be open and engaged with all those who need our support and care. We pray for our world: that the hope of this New Year and the peace we wish for in our hearts, and the hearts of those we serve, may become a reality.

Leader: We finish with the Prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi:
Prayer for Peace
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
R. Amen.

Submitted by Sr. Caroline Price, JP Contact of the Province of Australia/Aotearoa-NZ