

FROM THE DESK OF MARY SHARON . . .

For whom or for what shall we pray?

by Mary Sharon Moore

*This essay appeared originally in *Awakening Vocations' News & Views* Jan-Mar 2009.*

In my parish, after the general intercessions at Mass, the presider often asks, “For whom or for what shall we pray?”

This is a thoughtful question, and always evokes revealing answers. Sometimes I hear, “For a special intention,” “For a friend who is gravely ill,” “For family members who have left the Church.”

And for whom or for what do I pray? These days, as I join millions in turning the calendar to the start of a new year, as we bravely begin a new history together, for whom or for what do I pray? This question helps me to focus on where I am spiritually with my world. As a nation and as a world, together we are crafting a future out of what we do not know.

So I was particularly attentive recently to the line in Wisdom 9:3, where Solomon acknowledges that God made humankind “to govern the world in holiness and justice, and to render judgment in integrity of heart.” That’s the right order of things, I thought. And my prayer trailed off as I imagined a world governed in holiness and justice, a world for which I can only yearn and do my small but vital part to bring about.

For whom or for what do you pray? This is a question worth pondering, and worthy of an honest answer. At this time of transition and the stirring of hope in our nation in the midst of crises of unimagined proportions, we have a duty to ask God for wisdom, for renewed vigor for the cause of goodness for all people and for all of creation. We have a duty to pray for ourselves and equally for our nation’s leaders.

It’s right to pray for our nation and all nations, because our nation and all nations have a vocation, too. All nations are called to a greater purpose by God’s willing and God’s desiring. “Let the peoples praise you, God; let all the peoples praise you,” I hear in Psalm 117. And Revelation states, “Since you alone are holy, all nations shall come and worship in your presence” (15:4).

I believe that this ultimate call to worship will be fulfilled. You and I play some small but vital role right now in bringing it about.

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