

Readings for December 31, 2017 (evening) or January 1, 2018 (day)
World Peace; Solemnity of Mary; New Year's

FIRST READING

A Reading from Numbers 6:22-27

God spoke to Moses and said, “Speak to Aaron, Elisheba and their children and say: ‘This is how you shall bless the Israelites. You shall say:

*‘May God bless you and keep you,
May God’s face shine upon you, and be gracious to you,
May God’s face be lifted unto you, and give you peace.’**

In this way, they will invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The Word of a Priestly Writer.

Thanks be to God.

***Inclusive Priestly Blessing used at MMACC**

*May God bless you and keep you.
May she make her face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.
May he lift his face unto you,
and may God grant you peace all the days of your lives.*

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PSALM

Psalm 46:1-11 rendered by Merrill

The Psalm response is: May Love ever guide our lives.

R: May Love ever guide our lives.

The Beloved is our refuge and our strength,
a Loving Presence in times of trouble.
Therefore we need not fear though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
Though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

R: May Love ever guide our lives.

There is a river whose streams make glad the Holy City,
the habitation of the Holy.
The Beloved is in the midst of it; it shall not be moved.
Our loving Creator is an ever-present help.
The nations may be at war, countries left in ruins,
yet the Cosmic Sound of Silence is heard,
slowly breaking through hearts of stone.
The Beloved is ever with us, the infinite Heart of Love.

R: May Love ever guide our lives.

Come, behold the works of the Beloved,
how love does reign even in humanity's desolation.
For the Beloved yearns for wars to cease,
shining light into fearful hearts; loving
even those who oppress the weak, refining hearts of steel!

R: May Love ever guide our lives.

"Be still and know that I am Love.
Awaken! Befriend justice and mercy;
Do you not know you bear my Love?
Who among you will respond?"
O Blessed One, You know all hearts; You are ever with us.
May Love ever guide our lives!

R: May Love ever guide our lives.

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SECOND READING

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians 2:14-19

The Christ is the peace between us. Jesus the Christ has made two divided groups into one and has destroyed the barrier. Jesus' brokenness has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between us. The purpose was to create, in Christ's body itself, one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace. And also, in that one body, to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which hostility and violence were put to death.

Jesus the Christ came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. In the Christ, we both know our Loving God by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but citizens with God's holy people and also members of the household of God.

The Word of an early church writer.

Thanks be to God.

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GOSPEL

A Reading from the Good News attributed to Luke 2:15-20

When the angels in the night skies disappeared from the shepherds, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which God has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they shared the message they had received from the angels about the child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned to the fields, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

The Good News of Our God.

Thanks be to God.