



Footprints of Generosity

BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

"...For we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it, but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these." (1 Timothy 6:7-8 NRSV)

We have become a culture of collectors. We know that in some cultures, status is given to those with access to water. In other cultures, higher standing is given to those with livestock. In our Western monetary culture, status seems to be given with those who have money which is then displayed in homes, cars, etc.

With or without money, many of us in this country collect "stuff," following the bumper sticker that states, "the one who dies with the most toys wins." We have a yard sale on one Saturday to get rid of stuff and then end up going to a yard sale on the following Saturday to collect more. But we are reminded of the Jesus words, "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15)

The New Year calls us to take a fresh look at ourselves and at our lives. This is traditionally the time of year we make resolutions to be different in some way from the way we are right now. Perhaps a quest for living more simply could be our New Year's resolution for 2011. Seeking a simpler lifestyle is a form of discipleship, and it also implies generosity toward our God. By letting go of things, we will be less encumbered with "stuff" and subsequently be more able to share of ourselves with others and especially with God.

"A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God." (1 Timothy 6:6 The Message)

LITANY

Leader: God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in you.

Congregation: We thank you O God for all of life, for the generosity of your creation, for the abundance of your love, for the overwhelming blessings you pour down upon our lives.

Leader: God of the past, our times are in your hand; with us abide.

Congregation: Keep us mindful O God of the generosity of your grace in all our days gone by. As we reflect on past years, we thank you for the many ways in which your presence has been made known in our lives. And we seek your presence in this New Year coming upon us.

Leader: God of the coming year, through paths unknown, we follow you.

Congregation: Dear Lord, in this coming year may we be as generous with our time, our talents, and our resources as you are with us. May we truly reflect your love in the ways in which we give of ourselves. We pray that you will bless our efforts to be your worthy disciples.

(The leader lines of this litany are loosely based on the hymn, "God of our Life, Through all the Circling Years" written by Hugh T. Kerr.)

***Nurturing generous disciples
to serve as the
hands and feet of Christ***

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