

January 1, 2024

Daily Reflections



SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's First Reading

The LORD said to Moses: "Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them:

The LORD bless you and keep you!

The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!

The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!

So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them."

NUMBERS 6:22-27

Reflection

It is thought that this blessing from the Book of Numbers, which comprises the heart of today's teaching, may be very ancient. This formula was used by

priests in blessing the people at the end of their prayer together. It is still used in both Jewish and Christian liturgies. These phrases --- the Lord bless you, the Lord let his face shine upon you, and the Lord look upon you kindly – are variants of the same blessing of God’s favor. This prayer for prosperity, presence, and peace expresses our hope in God who alone can offer a blessed new year.

The Hebrew word for “face” (*panim*) is a collective noun suggesting all the qualities of a face: personality, attitudes and sentiments. God’s presence or very self is invoked. The threefold prayer for prosperity, presence and peace is a profound expression of our hope in God to make the year a joyful one.



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For Prayer

*May God have pity on us and bless us; may God let God's face shine upon us.
So may your way, O God, be known upon earth; among all nations, your
salvation.*

*May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity;
The nations on the earth you guide.*

*May the peoples praise you, O God, may all the peoples praise you!
May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth be in awe of you!*

Amen.

PSALM 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

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