**2020, A New Year Reflection.**

A happy and a prosperous New Year to one and all. In my prayer I entrust to the loving care of God Our Father all the people, homes, and communities of our Counties and diocese. I think especially of people who are really struggling.

The source of Christmas and New Year rejoicing is family, community and faith. We are not isolated individuals, we share our lives with family, friends and neighbours. United together we are strong and secure. Have time and, make time for people. Believe that in our lives we already have more than we need to be happy and fulfilled.

The birth of Jesus speaks to us of the presence, love and support of God in our lives. With God, family, neighbours and friends there for us, 2020 can be a good year for us all.

2020 brings its share of great challenges. I think of the working out of Brexit and the urgency of Care for the Environment. I think of homelessness and of the gaps in our health services. I think of our upcoming general election and of the valuing of our democracy. At an individual level many people of all ages suffer from ill health or sadness, from hurt or great anxiety. The Holy Spirit would have us unite and work together at all levels in our society in a selfless spirit of sharing and care for everyone.

In May 2018 Pope Francis gave us “Rejoice and be Glad”, a statement on how each one of us is called to holiness. He had in mind real “down to earth” holiness. He writes, “My modest goal is to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities.” In the central chapter he rephrases the Beatitudes, Mt 5: 1-12. His words encourage and challenge us as we celebrate the New Year. They powerfully present our Christian calling to live “love of God and love of neighbour”:

***“ In the Beatitudes we find a portrait of the Master (Jesus Christ), which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.***

Being poor at heart: that is holiness.

Reacting with meekness and humility: that is holiness.

Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness.

Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness.

Keeping a heart free from all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.

Sowing peace all around us: that is holiness.

Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness. **”**

God bless and a happy New Year to one and all.

Le gach dea-ghuí í gcomhair na hAthbhliana. Go mbeadh síochán áthas agus grá I do shaol.

Bishop Ray Browne

Diocese of Kerry

New Year 2020.