

Prayer before the Boston City Council  
January 5, 2009

In the wintry winds of a year's beginning, help us, dear God, Compassionate One, to find warmth in the presence of each other. In Your oneness we are one, though we often forget that we are. Open our eyes to see Your image in the face of every woman, man, and child. Remind us at every turn of season and of year that all are equal in Your eyes and so let them be in our eyes, each one beloved, no one to You a stranger or illegal. As Your image is the source of all the colors of the human rainbow, and of every way of speaking Your name and striving toward Your light, and of every way of loving and of being, so let us not put barriers among us as shattered trees fallen across the road. Harsher still than the winds that chill our bodies, are the winds that freeze our souls, the icy daggers of greed and indifference that turn us from each other.

Help us not to lose our way in the blinding storms that come, when vision is lost and the heart cannot see those along the way who have no place to go. Heating vents upon the sidewalk and stations underground are not places to call home. Do not let dreams be foreclosed upon and homes snatched away, giving us to know that none should profit on the misery of others and their misfortune. It is not a spirit of charity You seek to instill, but the pursuit of justice that will give each one their rightful due. Disabuse us of the notion that coins dropped into a cup are enough to say we've done our part. Raise our voices to say enough of war, its waste of life and wealth the abyss that drains our cities of possibility and backdrop for the violence that engulfs this land and tears our young apart, offering them no hope of spring and of blossoms yet to come.

In the uncertainty of beginnings let us see the light of hope that twinkles among the stars in a crisp clear sky, and help us to know for a certainty that only if we walk and talk together, even in the darkest of times, shall the light grow brighter through the night. As we go hand in hand into the year ahead, renew our faith in the possibility of realizing the vision You have given us of a caring and just society in a world at peace. Gathered by the hearth in the home that is our city, in the neighborhood that is our world, let us sing of what might be, and to each other say, be strong, be strong, and let us strengthen one another. Amen.