



Dear 2020

Fr Vincent Sherlock writes a letter to 2020, looking for a word of reassurance on what the future will bring. Fr Sherlock is parish priest of Kilmovee, Co. Mayo, and author of many *Messenger* books, including *Telling the Rosary* (2019, €4.95).

Dear 2020,

Now there's a year for you! 20/20 vision – they say that's as good as it gets. No doubt you've heard resolutions: more exercise, less food and drink, more time with family and friends, devote some time to prayer and charitable works. I'm sure you smile to yourself somewhat when you hear others making them. One of those surveys tells us that most resolutions are broken by 12 January. You'd wonder how they figure that out but I'm sure you know the pattern at this stage. Certainly, we will stumble along the way and doubtless many of the resolutions will fall to the ground but, there's still something worthwhile in making or, at least, wanting to make them. Again, you know that already.

In making those resolutions there is something in us that wants to meet you and make the most of that meeting but, to be honest you frighten us a bit too. We wonder what you have in store for us for, certainly come New Year's Eve 2020, so much will have happened. Thankfully much of it will be good and memorable but sadly, some of it will be heart-breaking and leave us shattered. There's no 20/20 vision for us as we look to you. The

future is a mystery to us and, though we might put on a brave face, there is genuine worry too. What will the year bring?

Have you any answer to that, 2020? Is there anything you can say to us these January days that might put our minds to rest? What have you to say to the person who is receiving treatment now? What word have you for those whose work situation is uncertain? Have you a message for the child, among thousands, who is looking out a hotel window today – not because he or she is on holiday but because that hotel room, with its luggage-strewn floor and cramped space, has become home because of homelessness? What direction have you to offer our Church? Is there anything you can say to troubled hearts? We met you halfway in at least wanting to make resolutions, so what have you to say to us?

Of course there is much to look forward to during your twelve month journey, we know that and are thankful and we will journey with you but, in January, a word from you – a word around hope, faith, peace, love, friendship, family, joy ... a word!

Yours sincerely, Wondering!

**Is there anything you can say to troubled hearts?
We met you halfway in at least wanting to make
resolutions, so what have you to say to us?**

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Dear Wondering,

Thank you for that very wonder! Truth told; the future is a mystery to me too. I can tell you this though, that there is nothing in me that wishes to make life difficult for anyone. I am that open calendar on the back of kitchen doors – just days, weeks and months. My calendar is blank, I have nothing marked, not even in pencil.

What I do know is that the word you look for – the word to the homeless child, the patient receiving treatment, the word for the Church, for family, friendship, love and all you mention – that word exists and is found in you. Share it with people. Share it with

yourself for it will strengthen you and, no matter what this year brings, as long as you trust in the goodness of your word, a true and lasting difference will be made.

The word I offer you is HOPE. It is all we have and resolutions made, even to 12 January, are rooted in that hope. We have what it takes to make a difference. It is not about 20/20 vision but about having a good heart, a noble spirit and a genuine desire to make the world a better place.

You know maybe it is about having vision – vision in 2020.

God bless you and Happy New Year, 2020. ❤️