**Prayer Service for Staff for the New School Year 2021**



***Leader:*** As we begin our new school year let us take a few moments of quiet reflection. *(Pause)*

We thank God for the beautiful summer we have enjoyed this year, and for the opportunity we have had to renew our energy and revitalize our spirit.

For all of us it is important just to take a pause before the year starts proper to gather our thoughts and to connect in with our own personal and deepest motivations for the work we’re going to do this year. There are any number of themes or ideas that might frame a prayer such as this; the importance of perseverance, the value of service, the principle of solidarity, the strength that comes from community. But I’m going to propose that we just take a few moments to reflect on a simple concept and that is the idea of continuity. Today I’d like to invite you to reflect not on what’s different about the year ahead but what is the same. To do that we’ll start with a beautiful poem called ‘Begin’ by Brendan Kennelly.

Reader 1;

Begin again to the summoning birds  
to the sight of the light at the window,  
begin to the roar of morning traffic  
all along Pembroke Road.  
Every beginning is a promise  
born in light and dying in dark  
determination and exaltation of springtime  
flowering the way to work.  
Begin to the pageant of queuing girls  
the arrogant loneliness of swans in the canal  
bridges linking the past and future  
old friends passing though with us still.  
Begin to the loneliness that cannot end  
since it perhaps is what makes us begin,  
begin to wonder at unknown faces  
at crying birds in the sudden rain  
at branches stark in the willing sunlight  
at seagulls foraging for bread  
at couples sharing a sunny secret  
alone together while making good.  
Though we live in a world that dreams of ending  
that always seems about to give in  
something that will not acknowledge conclusion  
insists that we forever begin.

— From [*The Essential Brendan Kennelly*](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__wfupress.wfu.edu_catalog_the-2Dessential-2Dbrendan-2Dkennelly-2Dselected-2Dpoems_&d=DwMF-g&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=rnVyLo0DdV9M0U3XdmLO4HlssPE2kteMMHHnrbEDFlk&m=4koaGmEJ1pn5QkJPd49rReX1tsz8Ob7eFWuCbuYLknA&s=CCnGqlI6rmRwA0uk9d7Rl3GNPDzysGfaPVPmLh57Dis&e=)

Reader 2: We pray that we will have the courage to begin again to meet the needs of our students, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and physical in these challenging times of the Pandemic, with the same energy and enthusiasm with which we met them last year.

Lord hear us. (Lord graciously hear us)

Reader 3: We pray that we will fall in love again with our own subject areas and that this love will give us the energy to share our knowledge and our enthusiasm with all of our students. Lord hear us. (Lord graciously hear us)

Reader 4: Let us pray for each other and for all the students we will meet and teach this coming year, remembering that as teachers we belong, not only to our own families, but also to a wider family - that our school is a family of families, that we are called to inspire our students with a love of learning and a passion for social justice; that we are called to be role models for them.

Lord hear us. (Lord graciously hear us)

***R.5*:** We pray for new colleagues among us that they will experience in our welcome the joy and care for each other that we share in this school.

Lord hear us. (Lord graciously hear us)

***R 6:*** We pray for parents that they will support and encourage their children in their education.

Lord hear us. (Lord graciously hear us)

***Leader:*** We pray together:

God, our Father, we are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son,

One family, in the Spirit of your love.

Bless us with the joy of love. Make us patient and kind,

gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need.

Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.

Protect all families with your loving care, especially those for whom we now pray:

*[We pause and remember family members and others by name].*

Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love,

Make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord, AMEN.

*Mary, mother and guide,* ***pray for us.***

*Saint Joseph, father and protector,* ***pray for us.***

*Saints Joachim and Anne,* ***pray for us.***

*Saints Louis and Zélie Martin,* ***pray for us.***

**KandLe.ie 2021**