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Leaves of Life For Daily Inspiration

Margaret Bird Steinmetz

Imprint

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TO THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED IN GATHERING THESE
LEAVES—AND TO THOSE WHO MAY GATHER SOMETHING
FROM THEM.

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JANUARY

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Janus am I; oldest of potentates;
Forward I look, and backward, and below
I count, as god of avenues and gates,
The years that through my portals come and go.

I block the roads, and drift the fields with snow;
I chase the wild fowl from the frozen fen;
My frosts congeal the rivers in their flow,
My fires light up the hearths and hearts of men.

—Henry W. Longfellow.

JANUARY FIRST

- Bartolome Esteban Murillo, baptized 1618.
- Paul Revere born 1735.
- Betsy Ross born 1752.
- Maria Edgeworth born 1767.
- Arthur Hugh Clough born 1819.

Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother men, nor yet the new;
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again!

We! what do we see? each a space

Of some few yards before his face;
Does that the whole wide plan explain?
Ah, yet consider it again!

Alas! the great world goes its way,
And takes its truth from each new day;
They do not quit, nor can retain,
Far less consider it again.

— Arthur Hugh Clough.

There are two sorts of content; one is connected with exertion, the other habits of indolence. The first is a virtue; the other a vice.

— Maria Edgeworth.

Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.

— Psalm 43. 3.

Almighty God, lead me in the search for life. Teach me what is important and what is unimportant; what is false, and what is true. Remove the hindrances that keep me from the worthiest deeds, and grant that I may have the peace that comes with surrender of self to thy will. Amen.

JANUARY SECOND

- General James Wolfe born 1727.
- Colonial flag first raised 1776.
- Mary Carey Thomas born 1857.

To what profit we could use the time for our present task that we

spend in impatient waiting and wondering over the future! So often the future is just one step up from the present, but some of us miss it by preferring to wait for an elevator.

—M. B. S.

Prepare to live by all means, but for heaven's sake do not forget to live. You will never have a better chance than you have at present. You may think you will have, but you are mistaken.

—Arnold Bennett.

He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him. He that lives on hope will die fasting.

—Benjamin Franklin.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest.

—Ecclesiastes 9. 10.

Gracious Father, my heart burns with shame when I think how much I claim, and how little I am. I pray that my body may not cast a shadow to-day, and cloud the light of my life to-morrow. Cleanse the windows of my soul that I may take in thy glory. Amen.

JANUARY THIRD

- Marcus Tullius Cicero born B. C. 106.
- Martin Luther excommunicated 1521.
- Douglas Jerrold born 1803.
- Charles Wagner (France) born 1852.

To be continually advancing in the paths of knowledge is one of the most pleasing satisfactions of the human mind. These are pleasures perfect consistent with every degree of advanced years.

—Cicero.

Fidelity in small things is at the base of every great achievement.

We too often forget this and yet no truth needs more to be kept in mind particularly in the troubled eras of history and in the crises of individual life. In shipwreck a splintered beam, an oar, any scrap of wreckage saves us. To despise the remnants is demoralization.

— Charles Wagner.

He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.

— Luke 16. 10

Almighty God, may I understand that thou art in everything and that I cannot hide from thee, for thou boldest me though I know it not. Give me the desire, and help me to learn of thy laws, that I may know that even in the least of things, I have the liberty to obtain happiness by obeying them. Amen.

JANUARY FOURTH

- Archbishop Usher born 1580.
- Jacob L. Carl Grimm born 1785.
- Elizabeth Peabody died 1894.

Years rush by us like the wind, we see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed: and yet time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the trees of their foliage.

— Sir Walter Scott.

The bell strikes one. We take no note of Time
But from its loss. To give it, then a tongue
Is wise in man; as if an angel spoke
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright
It is the knell of my departed hours:
Where are they?

— Edward Young.

Days should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom.
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding. It is not
the great that are wise, Nor the aged that understand justice.

—Job 32. 7, 9.

Lord God, help me to see my mistakes, and bring me to the realization of my life. Grant that I may no longer use the time that thou gavest me to learn in, heedlessly, but to give it my best thought and care. Amen.

JANUARY FIFTH

- Stephen Decatur born 1779.
- Robert Morrison born 1782.
- Thomas Pringle born 1789.

Let me go where'er I will,
I hear a sky-born music still:
It sounds from all things old,
It sounds from all things young,
From all that's fair, from all that's foul,
Peals out a cheerful song.

It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard,
But in the darkest, meanest things
There always, always something sings.

'Tis not in the high stars alone,
Nor in the cup of budding flowers,
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
But in the mud and scum of things

There alway, alway something sings.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

—Psalm 19. 1.

Almighty God, grant that my life may no longer be a noise, but be kept in tune with the sublimest melodies, that wherever I am, there may be no discords in the songs of my soul. Through thy loving-kindness may my songs resound. Amen.

JANUARY SIXTH

- Epiphany, or Twelfth-Day.
- Joan d'Arc born 1412.
- David Dale born 1739.

'Twas even so! and thou the shepherd's child,
Joanne, the lowly dreamer of the wild!
Never before and never since that hour
Hath woman, mantled with victorious power,
Stood forth as thou beside the shrine didst stand,
Holy amidst the knighthood of the land.

—Mrs. Felicia Hemans.

Every one must recognize the splendid work which has been done by women in social and educational fields. And it will, I believe, come more and more to be recognized that in some respects women are specially fitted for government and for official-municipal life.

—Sir Oliver Lodge.

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

—Judges 4. 4, 5.

My Father, help me to be thoughtful and just. May I consider the great truths and broader visions that may not be seen from where I stand. May I be willing to accept a better view. Grant that I may realize that the battle of life is not a sham battle, but a struggle for the advancement of life. Amen.

JANUARY SEVENTH

- General Putnam born 1718.
- Robert Nicholl born 1814.
- T. DeWitt Talmage born 1832.

Opportunities fly in a straight line, touch us but once and never return, but the wrongs we do others fly in a circle; they come back from the place they started.

—T. DeWitt Talmage.

Our share of night to bear,
Our share of morning,
Our blank is bliss to fill,
Our blank is scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
Some lose their way,
Here a mist, and there a mist,
Afterwards—day!

—Emily Dickinson.

Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your resting-place.

—Micah 2. 10.

Lord God, give me the desire to be persistent in service, while I have health and strength. May I experience the sweetness that comes in doing the thing that I ought to have done, as well as that in which I took the most pleasure. Help me to so live that my days may be useful, and be recalled with bright and happy recollections. Amen.

JANUARY EIGHTH

- John Earl of Stair died 1707.
- Sir William Draper died 1787.
- Alfred Russel Wallace born 1823.
- William Wilkie Collins born 1824.
- Sir Laurence Alma-Tadema born 1836.

A blue bird built his nest
Here in my breast.
"O bird of Light! Whence comest thou?"
Said he, "From God above:
My name is Love."

A mate he brought one day,
Of plumage gray.
"O bird of Night! Why comest thou?"
Said she: "Seek no relief!
My name is Grief."

—Laurence Alma-Tadema.

It is not so much resolution as renunciation, not so much courage as resignation, that we need. He that has once yielded thoroughly to God will yield to nothing but God.

—John Ruskin.

Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, Neither will he uphold the evildoers. He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter, And thy lips with shouting.

—Job 8. 20, 21.

Almighty God, help me to understand that peace does not come in rebellion or grieving, but is obtained through the calm of the soul. Grant that if I may be perplexed or worried to-day, I may have the power to control myself and wait in thy strength. Amen.

JANUARY NINTH

- Dr. Thomas Brown born 1778.
- Elizabeth O. Bengier died 1822.
- Caroline Lucretia Herschel died 1848, aged ninety-seven.

Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness altogether past calculation its powers of endurance. Efforts to be permanently useful must be uniformly joyous—a spirit of all sunshine.

—Thomas Carlyle.

Honest good humor is the oil and wine of a merry meeting.

—Washington Irving.

A laugh is worth a hundred groans in any market.

—Charles Lamb.

A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance; But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.

Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

—Proverbs 15. 13, 17.

Gracious Father, if I am sorrowing over disappointment and am forgetful, grant that I may see the things thou hast made, for which I should be thankful. Help me to so live that I may have a right to claim a cheerful heart. Amen.

JANUARY TENTH

- Dr. George Birkbeck born 1776.
- Michel or Marshal Ney born 1769.
- Karl von Linné, Linnæus, died 1778.
- Ethan Allen born 1737.

Shall I hold on with both hands to every paltry possession? All I have teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The practical weakness of the vast mass of modern pity for the poor and the oppressed is precisely that it is merely pity; the pity is pitiful but not respectful. Men feel that the cruelty to the poor is a kind of cruelty to animals. They never feel that it is injustice to equals; nay, it is treachery to comrades.

—G. K. Chesterton.

Be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing.

—1 Peter 3. 8, 9.

God of justice, may I pause to remember that while I may do a mean act and keep it hidden from others, I cannot keep it hidden from myself, nor from thee. Help me to have a nobler sense of the quality of life, and less anxiety for the quantity, that I may avoid harshness and selfishness, and be given to tenderness and justice. Amen.

JANUARY ELEVENTH

- Alexander Hamilton born 1757.