



## Vision and Viewpoint

Joan Chittister

### A New Year's Gift

My gift to you is always a story; something to think about more than once; something to keep your mind alive and touch your soul so that you can see life fresh and leaping once again.

*There is a story from the Desert Fathers and Mothers about a young monk who asked one of the holy men of the desert why it is that so many people came out to the desert to seek God and yet most of them gave up after a short time and returned to their lives in the city.*

*The old monk responded:*

*"Last evening my dog saw a rabbit running for cover among the bushes of the desert and he began to chase the rabbit, barking loudly. Soon other dogs joined the chase, barking and running. They ran a great distance and alerted many other dogs. Soon the wilderness was echoing the sounds of their pursuit but the chase went on into the night.*

*After a little while, many of the dogs grew tired and dropped out. A few chased the rabbit until the night was nearly spent. By morning, only my dog continued the hunt."*

*"Do you understand," the old man said, "what I have told you?"*

*"No," replied the young monk, "I don't. Please help me with it."*

*"It is simple," said the desert father. "My dog saw the rabbit!"*

The gift? A reminder to keep our souls focused on the important dimensions of life, on the purpose for which we have been born, on the gifts we are meant to give to others as life goes by. Otherwise we simply drift through life: one minute attracted by this; at another moment confused about what we're doing. Over the long haul, then, we become pilgrims without purpose, looking for what can't be found.

A Happy New Year to you every day of your life. May the gift be born in you and may you keep your eye on it always.

*Joan*