

**Opening Prayer – Catholic - Jewish Hanukkah Celebration
December 7, 2023**

Pope Francis has said: “Darkness is dispelled by the message that destruction and death do not have the last word, but rather renewal and life.”

Blessed are you, Lord, “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (Ex 3:6) You give us light through your commandments, and command us to bring your light to our world. As we gather during this time of the celebration of the rededication of your Holy Temple, we recall that you are indeed our light and our strength. You are the God who saves your people. You are the God who “shows mercy unto the thousandth generation” to those who love you and seek to do your will. As your people celebrate with hope, we trust in the light of your never-failing mercy, which calls us back to your love and your grace.

Help us in our gathering today to remember your call to be people of light and mercy, united by your love for us – even through our faults and our failings. Free us now from any spiritual bondage or blindness, helping us be faithful to you, as you are always faithful to the word you have addressed to us. You have made us your own people, and called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. You have shared with us everything that you are and given your grace and mercy freely. For this we joyfully praise your name forever.

May our celebration help us to carry on your work of mercy with all we meet. May we grow in our desire to spread the light of your love freely, holding nothing back, just as you have done for us.

We make this prayer to you, who are God forever and ever. Amen.