

Seven New Year's Resolutions for Every Catholic

The new year is upon us and we've likely come up with a whole host of resolutions—from joining a gym, losing weight, to kicking a bad habit.

As Catholics, we should also consider our spiritual health in the new year. What can we do to deepen our faith and grow closer to Jesus? Remember, our spirit lives forever, so we want to make sure we nourish it. Here are some resolutions to consider.

Attend Mass Every Sunday (Or Daily)

Start each week off with God by attending Sunday Mass. If you already do, try adding a Mass during the week.

Sunday Mass is the foundation of our lives as Christians. It's our opportunity to receive Christ in the Eucharist and unite with the rest of the Church in His living body. Pope Francis has said that by participating in the Mass, "We participate in the mystery of the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ."

Go To Confession

Go to confession as often as you need to, especially after committing a mortal sin.

It's easy for many of us to skip going to confession for weeks, months, or even years. We think that if we haven't robbed a bank or killed someone, we have nothing to confess. That couldn't be further from the truth. If we spend some time each day examining our conscience, we'll find that we sin more often than we think.

Forgive

When we pray the "Our Father," we say: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Furthermore, Jesus says, "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:14-15).

It's clear that we are required to forgive our neighbor, even if he or she has really hurt us. It can be one of the hardest things to do, but it's something we must strive for. Think about the anger, resentment and despair you feel when someone has wronged you in some way. Does that feel healthy? It's not. It pushes us toward seeking vengeance and leads us down an evil path.

When we forgive and let go of those feelings, we will ultimately feel better, and our soul will remain pure. This takes more than just saying "I forgive you" while keeping a grudge in our hearts. We must be honest with ourselves and truly let go for healing to occur. Remember, you can always go to your priest for spiritual guidance if you are really having a hard time.

Practice Corporal Works of Mercy

Practicing Corporal Works of Mercy takes many forms, including volunteering at your parish.

As Catholics, we are called to live out our faith as an example to others. This means going out and practicing what the Church calls the Corporal Works of Mercy: To feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the impoverished, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and bury the dead.

Living out our faith means using our God-given time, talent and treasure to help those in need. Catholic Charities is a wonderful place to help.

Pray The Rosary Once a Week (Or Daily)

The Blessed Virgin Mary promised to Saint Dominic that "Whatever you ask through the Rosary shall be granted."

The Blessed Virgin Mary promised to Saint Dominic that praying the Rosary would protect us from sin and evil and deliver to us special graces and blessings. At Fatima, she told the three shepherd children to pray the Rosary daily. It's one of the most powerful prayers we have.

The Rosary takes about 15-25 minutes to pray. This year, start by choosing one day a week to pray it. Keep adding days until you are praying it every day. By meditating on the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, you'll grow deeper in your faith and love for God.

Read A Book on a Catholic Topic

Pick out a book on a Catholic topic that interests you and read it to grow in knowledge of the faith.

We must constantly grow in our faith as Catholics. Part of this involves increasing our knowledge of Catholicism.

There are so many great books out there—from theological works, to prayer guides, to guidance on living a more Christian life. You can find a wide range of Catholic books in the Msgr. Fahey Parish Center library during office hours.

Go To Adoration Once a Month

Spend a few minutes per month, or more, with our Lord by adoring the Blessed Sacrament. St. Eugene's has a 24-hour Adoration chapel behind the church.

Eucharistic Adoration involves spending time with Christ in the form of the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacred Host, which becomes the Body of Christ, is placed in a container called a monstrance and displayed on the altar for prayer and adoration.

By adoring the Sacred Host, we are literally adoring Jesus because of His presence in the Eucharist.

What does it take? Just a few minutes of quiet time with Christ. Say a few prayers or just meditate on the Blessed Sacrament while gazing upon it.

Consider going once a month this year, at any time of the day or night. It will help you grow closer to Christ and develop a greater appreciation and love for the Eucharist.

The Bottom Line

We always find motivation at the beginning of the year to get in better shape, eat healthier, have better relationships and so on, but we should also find the motivation to live a life that will lead to Heaven. Otherwise, those other new year's resolutions don't really matter.

As you reflect on your resolution this year, consider how God is calling you closer to him. Is it through Mass, praying more, Adoration, Confession or in some other way? God is always trying to draw us closer to him. We just need to listen.

Resolutions adapted from The Mokena Marian
