

BAY AREA TAMIL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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New Year's Resolutions and Your Catholic Faith

With the New Year comes new hope for a new beginning. A new beginning is a perfect time to decide to strengthen your Catholic faith life. The New Year is here and it's that time of year when many people make New Year's resolutions, oftentimes only to break them soon thereafter. Why not tie your faith to some of your New Year's resolutions/goals? Below are some ideas to implement doing just that.

Prayer – Add more prayer to your daily life. There are many ways to pray. Traditional prayers like the Rosary, talking to our Lord, admiring his wonderful creations, quieting yourself in the presence of God through centering prayer are only a few ways to enrich your life with daily prayer. Get a daily prayer book or daily Catholic devotions book and read it. Living Faith is an excellent resource.

Faith Formation – No matter how old you are (children and adults alike), there are religious education programs designed to deepen your faith knowledge and formation. Find out what your parish offers and join a program or Bible Study group.

Be Active and Get Involved – Going to Mass on Sunday is only part of being a Catholic Christian.

There are so many ministries within the Catholic Church and all of them need volunteers to keep them running.

What ministries are offered within our BATCC? What interests you? Do you see a need within our community that's not being met?

Talk to your board members, you might just be able to initiate bringing a new ministry into the BATCC community.

Attend Mass – Of course we should always try to attend Mass on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation, but daily Mass is celebrated in most parishes. Try to attend Mass as often as your schedule will allow. What better way to start the day than with our Lord?

Take Your Christianity with You – Don't leave it in the church when you leave Mass. Strive to live as Jesus commands us to do so. By enriching your Catholic faith through going to Mass, attending faith formation programs, spending time with our Lord in daily prayer and being involved in your parish community, you will have more knowledge and tools to accomplish this goal.

Wishing you and your family a very blessed and wonderful New Year.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT - BLESSED PEOPLE

In the Bible, a blessing is depicted as a mark of God's relationship with a person or nation. When a person or group is blessed, it is a sign of God's grace upon them and perhaps even presence among them. To be blessed means that a person or people take part in God's plans for the world and humanity.

Some of Jesus' most famous words are contained in Sermon on the Mount, where he describes how and why various groups of people are blessed.

Very often we think people are blessed based on the material possession they have but Jesus tells us below what kind of people are blessed.

**Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3-10)**

Let us examine ourselves whether we are falling under any one of the categories mentioned above by Jesus to receive His blessings.

If we do not fall under any of the above categories do not worry. There is another category of blessed people which we as human beings do not like very often.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

Though we do not like when people insult & persecute, it gives us the ultimate blessing we needed. That is great reward in heaven. Even though it is very hard to rejoice and glad when people insult us let us try our best as Jesus Christ did.

Yours in Christ
Leenus Rich

New Year Resolution

"The Family that Prays Together Stays Together" says Al Scalpone, a professional commercial-writer, and was used as the slogan of the Roman Catholic Family Rosary Crusade by Father Patrick Peyton. New Year reminds us of new resolution. For a change this year, let us take the resolution to put God first in our families.

When we put God first we can see his wonders. This was experienced by my family on our trip to Lake Tahoe this Christmas break. Initially we planned to stay there for only two days. We had food for only two days. There were five families in our group. Due to heavy snow storm and road closure we had to extend our stay for couple more days. We had to find another rental home because the current one was no longer available. When the phone calls were unanswered from other rental properties and there was no vacancy in the hotels, the anxiety level was in its highest scale for everyone. What we forgot here was to pray before making the phone calls. We did not go to the Lord first rather we were worried and scared. At that moment we realized to pray before making the next decision. We prayed together the Rosary and read Psalm 91. As we prayed the anxiety level slowly went down to lower scale for everyone. Not only we got a better rental home, one of the neighbor

volunteered to take us to the grocery store (as our cars were buried in 17" snow).

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides" Mathew 6:33

Let us begin the New Year with family prayers. Let us put God FIRST in our family, every thing we begin to do, into every situation, problems, even in our enjoyments and celebrations. It need not be an elaborate one; 'Our Father' and three 'Hail Mary' will do a lot of difference in your families and in your personal lives.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—1 Corinthian 2:9

- AGNES P. RAJ

BIBLE CORNER

Begin the New Year meditating on these encouraging Bible verses chosen to inspire a fresh new walk with God and a deeper commitment to living the Christian faith.

Hope for the Future

"For I know the plans I have for you"

- Jeremiah 29:11



A New Creation

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things will become new."

- 2 Corinthians 5:17



Learning from Past Mistakes

"Our Fathers disciplined us for a while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

- Hebrews 12:10-11



Wait on the Lord

"Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

- Isaiah 40:31



This is a good story and is true, please read it all the way through until the end!

I am a mother of three (ages 14, 12, 3) and have recently completed my college degree. The last class I had to take was Sociology. The teacher was absolutely inspiring with the qualities that I wish every human being had been graced with. Her last project of the term was called, 'Smile.' The class was asked to go out and smile at three people and document their reactions. I am a very friendly person and always smile at everyone and say hello anyway. So, I thought this would be a piece of cake, literally.

Soon after we were assigned the project, my husband, youngest son, and I went out to McDonald's one crisp March morning. It was just our way of sharing special playtime with our son. We were standing in line, waiting to be served, when all of a sudden everyone around us began to back away, and then even my husband did. I did not move an inch... an overwhelming feeling of panic welled up inside of me as I turned to see why they had moved.

As I turned around I smelled a horrible 'dirty body' smell, and there standing behind me were two poor homeless men. As I looked down at the short gentleman, close to me, he was 'smiling' His beautiful sky blue eyes were full of God's Light as he searched for acceptance. He said, 'Good day' as he counted the few coins he had been clutching... The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. I realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue-eyed gentleman was his salvation. I held my tears as I stood there with them.

The young lady at the counter asked him what they wanted.

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He said, 'Coffee is all Miss' because that was all they could afford. (If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something He just wanted to be warm). Then I really felt it - the compulsion was so great I almost reached out and embraced the little man with the blue eyes. That is when I noticed all eyes in the restaurant were set on me, judging my every action.

I smiled and asked the young lady behind the counter to give me two more breakfast meals on a separate tray.

I then walked around the corner to the table that the men had chosen as a resting spot.. I put the tray on the table and laid my hand on the blue-eyed gentleman's cold hand.

He looked up at me, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'Thank you.'

I leaned over, began to pat his hand and said, 'I did not do this for you. God is here working through me to give you hope.'

I started to cry as I walked away to join my husband and son. When I sat down my husband smiled at me and said, 'That is why God gave you to me, Honey, to give me hope.'

We held hands for a moment and at that time, we knew that only because of the Grace that we had been given were we able to give. We are not church goers, but we are believers. That day showed me the pure Light of God's sweet love.

I returned to college, on the last evening of class, with this story in hand.

I turned in 'my project' and the instructor read it. Then she looked up at me and said, 'Can I share this?' I slowly nodded as she got the attention of the class.

She began to read and that is when I knew that we as human beings and being part of God share this need to heal people and to be healed.

In my own way I had touched the people at McDonald's, my son, the instructor, and every soul that shared the classroom on the last night I spent as a college student.

I graduated with one of the biggest lessons I would ever learn:

UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE.

Let this be our New Year resolve! Have a fantastic year 2011!

Mr. John Martin
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