

New Year’s resolution: Welcome God’s plan and wisdom

The arrival of a new year brings with it hope for conversion. That is why so many of us make New Year’s resolutions. We are inspired by the idea that we can live the 365 days ahead of us in ways that we didn’t live the year that is behind us. Although I don’t always see the resolutions I have made each year to their fulfillment, I find it important to set some goals that provide me with the impetus to be a better priest and a better person.

Although many people like to share their New Year’s resolutions with their family and friends, I prefer to keep mine to myself. Not because they are some deep dark secret, but rather because they are often related to the journey of my spiritual life. I use the Advent season as a time to prayerfully reflect on the year that is coming to a close. I examine the many aspects of my life and ministry over the past year in order to determine what my resolutions will be for the new year.

This may sound a bit quirky, but it has allowed me to bring focus to my life and ministry. I can’t say that I always stay on track, but I come back to these resolutions periodically throughout the year to see how I am doing. I find that having them gives me purpose and motivation.

Although I usually make these resolutions without any outside assistance, I have been known to use the suggestions of my spiritual director as goals for the coming year. I have found his wisdom and spiritual guidance profoundly helpful in bringing conversion to my life. It does help to have “another set of eyes” when it comes to looking at ourselves, which is why I have at different times also used items drawn from conversations with my friends and colleagues when making my resolutions.

I have always been the type of person who had a clear direction for my life. Prior to entry into the seminary, I had a strong sense of where I wanted to go in life. It was only after beginning the spiritual journey of discerning the call God had placed in my heart that I

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realized my direction in life wasn’t my own to set. I came to understand that, as a disciple, I needed to turn to God for direction. Without a clear sense of God’s purpose and direction for our lives, we can become like a “runaway” balloon floating in the sky. We will end up going only where the winds of our ego, our culture or our peers may take us.

God has a plan for each of us. Unless we turn to him we will not be able to tap into the wisdom of this plan. Resolutions (or goals) that don’t have God’s loving design for our discipleship as their foundation are only the whims of men and women. Is it any wonder then that the average person has abandoned their New Year’s resolutions by the end of January?

May this new year be an opportunity for all of us to seek God’s plan for our lives and use this wisdom as the direction for how we live, who we are and what we do.



Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids online vocational resources:

Priestly vocations
dioceseofgrandrapids.org/vocation/welcome.htm

Religious orders
dioceseofgrandrapids.org/clergy/religiousorders.htm

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