

## GOOD NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

In January, it is natural for all of us to reflect on the “newness” that stretches before us: a new year filled with new opportunities to live and grow in our faith.

Ever think about making several holy New Year's resolutions? Go deeper, down to your soul, and consider ways to grow stronger and closer to God in 2021. These new behaviors can easily become habits and expand our capacity for holiness while going about the day.

**1-Read the Word.** Put a Bible somewhere convenient, and open it up once a day and read what the Lord is saying to you.

**2-Enjoy the wait.** What do you do while waiting for the microwave or while waiting for someone to answer their phone? Turn inconsequential moments into prayers of consequence.

**3-Use sirens and flashing lights as prayer signals.** Pray for the person needing the ambulance speeding by and also for whomever is at the end of a police call. For whatever reasons, they could use some extra prayers.

**4-Do a small fast.** Take a day to give up something like coffee, wearing jewelry or makeup, going on social media, or whatever.

**5-Give a return on your gift.** When using a gift, say a prayer for the giver. For instance, say a Hail Mary for the person who gave you a plant every time you water it. When using clothing or jewelry someone gave to you, say a prayer for the giver.

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### A Prayer For The Year Ahead

May God make your year a happy one! Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes; Not by making our path easy, but by making us sturdy to travel any path; Not by taking hardships from us, but by taking fear from our heart; Not by granting us unbroken sunshine, but by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows; not by making our life always pleasant, but by showing us when people and their causes need us most, and by making us anxious to be there to help. May God's love, peace, hope and joy be with us in the year ahead. AMEN

## JANUARY 3<sup>rd</sup> - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

In early January, when most people have taken down Christmas decorations, Catholics are still celebrating the Christmas season. Toward the end of the season, the Church celebrates the Feast of Epiphany, which commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Holy Family. Among the many centuries-old traditions associated with this feast, the annual Epiphany house blessing is one of the most beloved.

In years past, priests would visit all of the parishioners during the Christmas season to bless their houses. Since this is virtually impossible for most priests today, lay people usually perform the blessing. Someone in the family-ideally the father or head of household-sprinkles holy water in each room of the house and says a special prayer, such as this one:

*Bless, O Lord, Almighty God, this home so that in it there may be health, chastity, victorious strength, humility, goodness and mildness, obedience to God's laws and acts of thanks to God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and may this Blessing remain upon this house and upon all who dwell in it. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN*

The Church teaches that our faith should always be a priority. Through the Epiphany house blessing, we are welcoming the Christ Child into our hearts and our homes as He blesses our upcoming year.

\*The parishioners of Good Shepherd would like to say a big "Thank you" to Paul Phelps. He has been doing the janitorial duties at the church and is so much appreciated. Also a "Thank you" to Glen Hunt for refurbishing the bench by the front door of the church. It is now nice and sturdy and looks like new. Jobs well done!