



Around the Parish

JANUARY NEWSLETTER



8 (Spiritual) New Year's Resolutions for Catholic

Here we are again: it's time to make our annual New Year's resolutions.

Every Catholic should add to their list a few spiritual resolutions designed to help them climb that mountain of faith!

Let the freshness of a new year be your impetus to make new strides in your walk with God. There is no time like the present!

1. Increase Your Marian Devotion.

In this most prophetic of all Marian apparitions, Our Lady of Fatima made urgent pleas for mankind to reform themselves and to pray her rosary daily. She also gave other grave messages and warnings with dire consequences for the entire world. Her messages were authenticated on October 13, 1917 with an undisputed public miracle of biblical proportions, during which an estimated 70,000 people were gathered to witness what became known as the Miracle of the Sun.

However, Our Lady's pleas have not been heeded, and the last century has seen a widespread loss of Christian faith, massive breakdowns in marriages and families, and the rejection of basic moral laws. This affects all of us, and, as a result, anxiety and depression have risen to epidemic levels.

The way to turn back to God is the same way that God came to us—through the Blessed Mother. In 2024, commit yourself to increasing your Marian devotion so that she may lead you to deeper conversion; to a renewed following of God's will for your life; and to an increase of your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

2. Make more time for spiritual reading.

The brilliant St. Athanasius once said,

"You will not see anyone who is striving after his advancement who is not given to spiritual reading. And as to him who neglects it, the fact will soon be observed in his [lack of] progress."

If you want to make progress in your walk with God in 2024, spiritual reading should be high on your list.

Your best bet is to stick to the classics written by Catholic saints known for their practical spiritual wisdom—such as Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales, Therese of Lisieux, and John of the Cross.

There are also audio books available for many classic Catholic titles.

The four gospels and the letters of St. Peter and St. Paul are also excellent choices for reading, being the inspired Word of God.

If you struggle with finding the time to read, make a list of books that you'd like to complete in 2024 and pray that God will show you how you can find the time to read them. Maybe this will mean cutting out TV time or slimming back on unnecessary social activities.

The time you spend feeding your soul is time better spent.

3. Make good stewardship a lifestyle.

This boils down to one key concept in the life of the Christian: practicing good stewardship over the gifts God has given us. Good stewardship means good management of our "time, talent, and treasure" for the greater glory of God.

As Jesus warned us in His parables, all of His servants will be judged on how they used the graces He gave them. Do we neglect them and spend them selfishly, or are we generous in building up God's kingdom on earth?

Prayerfully evaluate how you will spend your time, your talents, and your income in 2024 to see what lifestyle changes you can make that will positively impact your spiritual life. Make it big. God cannot be outdone in generosity!

4. Share your Catholic faith with others.

With so many people far away from God today (and more and more people noticing it), the culture is ripe for evangelism. There is a real hunger for God and his Truth.

Modern Catholics aren't usually great about sharing their faith with others, but this is something that can change with practice.

You don't have to be obnoxious or overbearing about your faith—just focus on doing simple things, such as being joyful in your walk with Christ and inviting people to come to Mass with you.

Another good idea is to buy some sacramentals in bulk, get them blessed, and hand them out to people.

If someone you know is going through a difficult time and you give them a Miraculous Medal or a prayer card out of a stash you always keep handy, it might be the touch of God that they need in that moment.

5. Bring back regular penances.

Living a penitential life, even outside of Advent and Lent, is the Catholic way of life. All of the Church's saints performed penances habitually, either internally or externally, great and small, for themselves and for others.

Many Catholics do not know that Fridays outside of Lent are also days of abstinence and fasting.

While the Church law against eating meat on the Fridays outside of Lent was altered by the U.S. bishops—meaning, it can be substituted with some other form of penance—it was never removed entirely. Such penances give special reverence to the day of the week on which Our Lord died on the cross.

What penitential practice can you do each Friday in 2024?

Maybe it's the tried-and-true abstinence from meat, or perhaps another penitential practice such as praying the Stations of the Cross, or even acts of service for the less fortunate. Be creative.

Remember that penances aren't meant to be pleasant at first, but the graces that come from them grow sweeter with time.

6. Go an extra day to Mass during the week.

Mass is not only the source and summit of our faith—it is also the source and summit of our very life.

This new year, think of ways you can arrange your schedule and activities so that you can make it to Mass either an extra day each week, or a few extra days a month. If you have trouble with this due to a packed schedule, pray and ask Our Lord to help you find the time.

Maybe it will involve switching a travel route, or leaving for work an hour early, skipping lunch, or missing a regular Saturday morning activity for one Saturday a month. Check all the parishes in your area and their Mass times and see what can be done, and remember that daily Masses are usually only thirty minutes long.

If it's still impossible with your schedule, find out when your local parishes keep their doors open, and try to add time for Adoration outside of Mass, even if just for fifteen minutes.

7. Pray the Rosary.

No Catholic list of New Year's resolutions would be complete without a daily Rosary added in. If you already pray the Rosary daily, that is fantastic. Your resolution can then be to spread devotion to the Rosary in 2024.

There are many ways you can do this. You can purchase inexpensive rosaries in bulk, get them blessed, and hand them out as the opportunity arises.

You can also invite others to pray the Rosary with you, teach others how to pray it, or encourage those who don't pray it daily to do so. Tell them about Our Lady's promises to those who pray the Rosary. Maybe they don't know that the Rosary is a spiritual weapon that will help them fight all their personal battles.

8. Pick a new saint buddy.

Why not take on the tradition of choosing a different Catholic saint as a special patron each year? There are so many of them with unique graces to bestow.

Pray about your New Year and the goals you have for your spiritual life, your family, your relationships, your career, etc.

Then choose a patron saint whose virtues you would like to emulate in New Year, and entrust your year to their special intercession.

Perhaps there is a particular saint whom you already admire, but to whom you have never prayed or had a devotion. Ask this saint to be your guide for 2024.

This is a great way to guard against the typical two-week lifespan of New Year's resolutions. With a new saint by your side praying for you, it will be a lot harder for your goals to slip away.

HAPPY
New Year

SACRED HEART CHURCH

A very **BIG** THANK YOU to our amazing and dedicated children and parents of the parish, who filled the shoes of our Angels, Mary, Joseph in the Nativity, as well as our special guest, Santa Claus!

THANK YOU to all of our amazing singers in the Children's Christmas Eve Choir—You all did an amazing job!

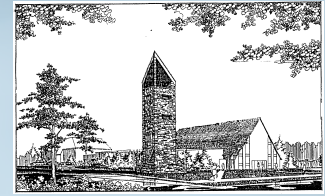
MAY YOU SHINE
THE LIGHT OF
CHRIST IN THE
NEW YEAR!



Listen to the words of the book of Genesis (Genesis 1:14-19):

God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth." And so it happened: God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was. Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Sacred Heart Book Club -
Wachter Room**

January 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

SHS Catholic Schools Week

January 29th, 2024

**Feast of the HOLY FAMILY
Saturday, 30 December
5:00 PM - Vigil
Sunday, 31 December
7:30, - 9:30 & 11:15 AM**

**Solemnity of MARY,
THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
THE NEW YEAR'S EVE**

**Sunday, 31 December 2023
5:00 PM – Vigil Mass
Monday, 1 January 2024
8:00 & 11:15 AM**

**Please note this time change for this Feast.
This year this is a Holy Day, but not of obligation*

**Monday/New Year's Day Mass @ Holy
Rosary
9:30 AM**

**The Solemnity of the EPIPHANY
6 – 7 January 2024
5:00 PM Vigil
7:30 AM, 9:30 & 11:15 AM**

*A Joyous Christmas &
a Blessed & Prosperous New Year.
"God bless us, everyone!"*

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Belle Dorothy Urban

Born January 7, 2022

Daughter of Kevin and Lauren
Urban



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We truly appreciate your participation in our activities throughout the year and are looking forward to 2024, and as always, ***we are always looking for more good Catholic men to join our Council!***

Your donations, funding and participation in our various yearly events provides funding and support in the following ways:

- **RSVP Program:** Financial Support of four local Seminarians.
- **Roses & Rosary Program** – Council presence and gifts at Baptisms for both churches.
- Support of **LifeLine of Berks County** at the Annual Banquet and providing donations for Coats for Kids with 26 Newborn to 2T coats provided this year.
- Provide **project aid to both parishes** when needed.
- Provide an **Appreciation Lunch** for our school's Faculty & Staff and Rectory Clergy & Staff during Catholic Schools Week.
- **Conduct events** and provide a special meal for our local Veterans.
- **Coats for Kids Program** – Berks Catholic Charities with donation of 85 3T to teen coats this year.
- Facilitate the **Annual Swing and A Prayer Golf Outing** in conjunction with Sacred Heart School.

Recitation of the Rosary is now on the weekly schedule, and we hope you can join us on Sunday mornings after the 9:30am Mass in the church and at 5:30pm before Mass on Tuesday evenings. All are welcome!

Important 2024 K of C dates for your calendar:

January 4 – December's Officer Meeting – IHM Room 7:00pm
January 18 - Membership Meeting – IHM Room 6:30-9:00pm

COMING IN **FEBRUARY/MARCH** – Soup and Sandwich returns for Lent on select Fridays before Stations of the Cross!

COMING IN **MARCH** – C.O.A.L. – PA STATE COUNCIL Chance of A Lifetime ticket sales.

The Knights of Columbus Monsignor Bornemann Council membership is open to all practicing Catholic male adults, aged 18 and over, who wish to serve their parish and community. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month. To join, contact John Sylvester at 610-451-6980, or go to bornknights.org and fill out the Contact Form located on our website OR sign up directly using the online KofC link.



WELCOME

TO THE PARISH

Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Maura

Izzo



Miss Gypsy Alvarez and Sons

OUR CONDOLENCES TO:

The Bennis Family and
Friends on the passing of:

Walter Bennis

11-13-2023

The Harkness Family and
Friends on the passing of:

Anna Harkness

11-29-2023

The Davis Family and
Friends on the passing of:

Martha Davis

12-8-2023



2023 Tax Contribution Statements

An itemized statement of contributions for tax purposes will be issued to any parishioner requesting one.

If you would like one, please fill out the form below and place it in the collection basket or drop it off at the rectory.

You may also request a statement by emailing us at: **activity@shrcparish.org**.

To reduce mailing costs, we ask that you request your statement be emailed to you.

Thank you for your generous support of our parish!



PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION TO THE RECTORY OFFICES
BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST 2024.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____