

MAKING SPIRITUAL RESOLUTIONS THAT BRING US CLOSER TO JESUS CHRIST

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Many of us enter the New Year hoping to stop smoking, or eat better; to be less distracted and more focused; less something else and more whatever it is we think is lacking in us. Our resolutions show we are discerning what is best for us. Prayerfully considered, we ought to resolve to be holy, to become saints. *Nothing* is better for us than being united with Jesus (and there's no viable alternative to being a saint in heaven). Spiritual resolutions ought to reflect God's will and help us become more faithful disciples. They should aim us toward deeper, loving encounters with Jesus, help us overcome obstacles of sin and pride, and draw us humbly to sainthood. Our spiritual goals should be simple and clearly focused on growing closer to Jesus. Here are some ideas. Pick one or two to start.

- **Commit to daily prayer.** Start with just 10 minutes, or 10 minutes more a day. We will develop a relationship with Jesus by talking with Him as to a friend. Tell Him your cares. Tell Him you love Him. Thank Him for everything ... ahead of time.
- **Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament** in the chapel or at a perpetual adoration chapel nearby. This is related to prayer, but we don't have to say or do anything. Just *be* with Him and listen with our hearts.
- **Offer ourselves to God** at the Presentation of the Gifts during Mass. When the priest raises the bread and wine to be blessed by the Spirit, consciously present ourselves, all we are and have, back to God.
- **Do more spiritual reading**, especially the Gospels. Read one of the saints who offers practical wisdom for spiritual growth (e.g., St. Francis de Sales).
- **Go to Confession more often**, not just in Lent or Advent. Most of us don't go nearly enough, depriving us of one of the most freeing, refreshing, and Spirit-filled encounters we can have on this earth with our loving Father and His Son, our most merciful Lord.
- **Forgive others.** To forgive is a choice and the only condition God places on any blessing. We are forgiven only as we forgive others, as we pray in the *Our Father*. Refusing to forgive only hurts ourselves. Let us resolve to forgive someone who has hurt us or failed us. Pray for the Grace to forgive specific people for specific hurts.

Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit that we may be granted the gifts of fortitude and perseverance as we begin 2018 resolved to grow closer to your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.