Ah, new year’s resolutions. Sometimes this can give us a bit of angst, as we think about the work ahead to improve ourselves. Or maybe it gives us hope for a new beginning, a new leash on life to attempt to solve a problem that’s been plaguing us for years! Or maybe it brings a sense of discouragement, due to past resolutions that ended unfulfilled. Regardless of how we all feel about resolutions, I’d like to encourage us to think about making one commitment this year related to our faith. One way we can grow in holiness, or one way we can help others grow in holiness. Our Lord promises us that if we, “Seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness...all these things will be given you besides,” ~ Mt. 6:33 (NABRE). So let’s give God the first fruits of 2022, and make a commitment to grow closer to Him. Here are some ideas:

#1: Bring Scripture into your daily life. Do you take time to meditate and pray on God’s Holy Word? If not, I guarantee you it will change your life. Each morning, there is no better way to start the day than by being in His Word. One of the speakers for our men’s conference—Father Larry Richards—has a saying, “No bible, no breakfast. No bible, no bed.” He preaches over and over again the importance of beginning your day with the Word of God, and ending your day with the Word of God. God’s Word is nourishment for our souls! Just take even a few minutes each day to begin with a passage of Scripture, maybe the daily Gospel? You can find them at www.usccb.org.

#2: Invite a friend to the men’s or women’s conference! We have an INCREDIBLE lineup this year, as you can see below. I promise you lives will be changed for those who attend. What better way to evangelize someone than by inviting them to a fun and exciting event that will make a difference in their life? Tickets are on-sale now, and group discounts are available. We’d love to have you join us so you are encouraged in your faith, and equipped with new tools to go out and share it with others!

Tickets at www.victoriadiocese.org/men and www.victoriadiocese.org/women
#3: Go to Mass more frequently. Ah, if we would only avail ourselves of the Sacraments more and more! Each Sacrament is such a treasure from God, and we barely understand the immeasurable graces available to us through them. If you go to Mass weekly right now, why not try a daily Mass once a week on a day that is convenient for you? If you don’t even go weekly, why not make that your goal so you are officially a practicing Catholic? Whatever it may be, try to increase it just once a week. Your life will see the benefits, and your eternity as well!

#4: Draw closer to Mary. Have you given Mother Mary the attention she deserves? After all, Christ gave us her as our mother as he was dying on the cross. She loves you! He loves you in giving her to us, and us to her. What can you do to grow closer to Mary this year? How about a daily rosary? Or a daily Hail Mary even? Or maybe completing consecration to her if you haven’t done so already? There are many guides, even free ones online, to help you prepare for consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. You will not regret it. As St. Pope John Paul II says, “From Mary we learn to surrender to God’s Will in all things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ her Son and the Son of God!”

#5: Go to Confession. Even if just once, just go. Don’t think about it, just do it. I promise you will be SO glad you did! The church says we should go at least once a year, and our bishop has been recommending we go monthly, as have many saints and holy people. So why not? What is holding you back? Let go of that guilt in 2022 and allow the freedom of Christ to take over in your life! He wants to free you from whatever sin is holding you back from living a totally fulfilled life in Him.

I pray these 5 suggestions have given you some food for thought. A spiritual mentor recently told me that it’s important to set realistic goals when trying to grow spiritually. So maybe just pick one thing you can do this year. Whatever it is, it will be worth it! God Bless! ~ Justin Reyes, Director of Family Evangelization, 361-573-0828 x 2265, jreyes@victoriadiocese.org, www.victoriadiocese.org/family