

Reflection for 31st December 2020

New Year Resolutions

You might want to think about some of these ideas for the new year to start some good Catholic habits:

1. Prayer is essential for your spiritual life and it's very important to develop the habit of saying the morning offering and evening prayer every day, grace before and after meals and maybe the Angelus at midday. If you look in the Simple Prayer Book (available from the piety stall) you will find all these prayers.
2. Try to go to Mass on a day in the week if there is a particular saint's day or feastday as well as on Sunday. Some people come to the Holy Hour on Friday after work (5.15pm) to spend some time with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Another good Catholic devotion is going to Mass on the first Friday of each month.
3. Read some scripture each day. There are some very good ways to develop this habit, use publications like Bible Alive, Day by Day or Magnificat. If you want to look at these booklets please ask me. Alternatively, you could take a chapter of St Mark's Gospel each day.
4. How often should you go to Confession? Everyone has to decide this for themselves, every fortnight, every month, every 3 months etc? Whatever you decide try to make it a regular time otherwise it won't happen.
5. Every week Friday is a special day of penance when you could give something up or do something extra. For example, abstain from eating meat or some other food you usually enjoy. This simple act of penance reminds us that Jesus died for us on the cross on Good Friday. On Saturdays we think about Our Lady and say some special prayers to her, perhaps the rosary or at least a decade.
6. Develop an awareness of the needs of others, especially those who don't have much. Look at what you have and think is there anything I could give, clothes, food, household items etc? Bring

them to church for the SVP society who will pass them on to the needy of the parish or donate them to the charity shop of your choice.

Feast days in January

The month of January is traditionally dedicated to The Holy Name of Jesus.

1st January is the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. A solemnity means a very important feast day when we celebrate something special. It is a good day to go to Mass if you can, but it is not a holyday of obligation. We call Mary the Mother of God because she is the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

6th January is the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. This is a Holyday of Obligation when Catholics are obliged to attend Mass. This is the day when we celebrate the arrival of the three wise men or three kings. It is the day when Jesus was revealed to people who were not Jews to show that Jesus came to save everyone. See Matthew's Gospel chapter 2 verses 1-12).

10th January is the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. This is one of the occasions in the Gospels when Jesus is revealed as the second person of the Holy Trinity; The Father's voice is heard and the Spirit appears as a dove. Although Jesus did not need to be baptised by John in the River Jordan, he wanted to stress the importance of Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit. He said unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (See Mark's Gospel chapter 1 verses 7-11).

God bless you and your family and have a happy and blessed New Year.

Deacon Kevin