

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

A New Year, A New Opportunity, and New Challenges

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We are now halfway through the first month of the New Year in the year 2026. For most of us, years blur together with time and, eventually, when we look back at this decade, we will lump this New Year in with the 20's and say something like this, *'The 20's began with a Covid-19 pandemic which threw the US and the world into chaos, the mid-20's brought about AI technology and the late 20's yada yada yada will happen.'* In other words, years will collide upon each other and not much will be remembered in the sense that this event or that event happened in 2026.

This New Year can be different for you and me as we make plans for this year to be a better year in many ways, such as our health, our family, our workplace, and our friendships. The problem is that it will be April in the blink of an eye, and the above list will have barely changed.

A New Year is nothing more than a continuation of our stories. Our story did not begin on January 1, 2026, or January 1 of 2025, 2020, or any other New Year's Day. The focus of the New Year is to build upon what we have been doing. Changes and betterment can happen at any time we want; we don't have to wait for the ball to fall on New Year's Eve to make changes to our lives. Any day will do.

2026 will provide each of us with new opportunities to grow in our faith life, to knit our families closer together, and establish new friendships. The key is to look for them and then to act upon them. For example, there are plenty of opportunities here at St Joseph to get involved in ministry, to help our neighbor, to share our faith with fellow parishioners, to make a Holy Hour, and participate in Mass. This will not only help you, but could provide you with new meaning to life and help you form new friendships and strengthen the family bond.

With every New Year, every day for that matter, we all face challenges and perhaps 2026 will present you with a new challenge. You might encounter a new health issue, a new child, a death in your family, a new job, a change of location, new in-laws, or new issues in your personal life. The challenges can seem overwhelming without faith. Use the gift of this New Year and new energy to focus on deepening your faith so that whatever comes along, good or bad, you'll have the tools to face the challenges.

In summary, the New Year is just a continuation of our story of life towards Christ. Make sure you are on the right path. Let Jesus do the rest!

The New Year is an opportunity to look and see what needs strengthening in your life and act without fear upon ways to build a stronger relationship with the Lord. Let Christ help you with his grace!

The New Year will present challenges which are both good and bad, let your faith see you through them. Taking everything into your own hands will lead to anxiety, fear, and failure. Let Jesus hold your hand through the good and the bad!

My suggestions are the same as every year:

1. Go to Mass on Sundays and pick a day of the week as well.
2. Make a Holy Hour with the Lord.
3. Read your scriptures and know the Lord through salvation history.
4. Get involved in some ministry or formation. They are key to a happy faith life.
5. Seek forgiveness daily and use the Sacrament of reconciliation.

Happy New Year!

Father John