

## A Happy and Blessed New 2026 Year

The New Year is a sacred moment - an invitation to renewal - when we resolve to make changes so that our lives will not remain as they were before. For Catholic Christians, this resolution is not merely about self-improvement but about conversion of heart.

Time is too precious a gift, too scarce a commodity to be squandered. When we waste it, we lose more opportunities than we realize. Each moment is a grace-filled opportunity for prayer, for kindness, for self-control, and for growth in holiness. "Make the best possible use of your time," says St. Paul (Colossians 4:5). Time is not simply a succession of empty moments; it is a God-given opportunity to repent, to turn to Jesus, to love God and neighbor, and to grow more and more into His likeness.

How we spend our time is far more important than how we spend our money. Money mistakes can often be corrected, but when time is gone, it is gone forever. For this reason, the Catholic tradition has always encouraged a daily examination of conscience, helping us to ask how we have used the gift of time entrusted to us by God.

A well-known example of wise use of time comes from Charles M. Schwab, former president of Bethlehem Steel. Seeking greater productivity, he asked consultant Ivy Lee for advice. Lee suggested a simple daily practice: write down the tasks for the next day, rank them by importance, and complete them in that order. Schwab later called this lesson the most profitable of his career.

What a difference it would make in our lives as disciples of Jesus if we adopted a similar approach - guided not by profit, but by prayer. Imagine beginning each day by asking:

"Lord, what do You want me to do today for You, for my family, for others, and for myself?" This is the heart of a Catholic New Year's resolution: to establish priorities rooted in faith. Traditionally, the Church invites us at the beginning of a new year to renew our commitment to:

- Daily prayer, even if brief, placing God first in our day
- Frequent reception of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation
- Conversion of life, turning away from sin and growing in virtue
- Acts of charity and mercy, loving our neighbor in concrete ways
- Faithful stewardship of time, using each day for God's greater glory

Such resolutions are not about perfection, but about faithfulness. They remind us that every day is a new chance to begin again with God's grace.

Jesus Himself sets before us the true priority for the New Year and for every day of our lives: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

If we make this our resolution - seeking God first in how we use our time - then the New Year will truly be a happy, holy, and blessed one.

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