

CATHOLIC KEY ≡

DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH

A RESOLUTION ROOTED IN GRACE

FATHER PAUL TURNER • 12.3.2025



By Father Paul Turner

Dissatisfaction and hope are the twin drivers of New Year's Resolutions. People are dissatisfied with something — their weight, their health, their nutrition, their anger or some aspect of a relationship. Yet they have some hope. They believe themselves capable of change, so they make a resolution.

Catholics often enter Lent with similar drivers: we're dissatisfied with our sin, distraction from prayer or lack of catechesis. Yet we have hope — not just in ourselves but also in Christ. We believe that he can give strength to reform our lives and lend grace to our resolve.

Many New Year's resolutions fail within the first few weeks of the year. Perhaps it's because people base their resolve solely on themselves and not enough on grace.

The Catholic Church offers assistance for those making something special of the New Year. Plenary indulgences are available on both days under the usual conditions. On New Year's Eve, you qualify if you recite the *Te Deum* publicly. On New Year's Day, you qualify if you pray the *Veni, Creator*.

The turning of the year naturally invites a celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. As you reflect on both blessings and dissatisfactions of the past year, and as you resolve to follow Christ more closely in the new year, you are already examining your conscience for a good confession.

The Gospel at Mass on Jan. 1 recounts an intimate moment in Mary's young motherhood. After the birth of Jesus, the announcement by angels, the arrival of shepherds, and their departure as evangelists, Mary "kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."

Whether we are driven by dissatisfaction or hope, we may do the same. Let us keep the past year in mind, reflect on its events, admit the dissatisfactions, set new spiritual goals, and keep our hopes on Christ.



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