

A list of resolutions for your liturgical new year



Ever since starting my job with Our Sunday Visitor, I've loved following more closely the ebb and flow of the liturgical year. Due to the fact that, as a print publication, we go to press nearly two weeks ahead of the actual print date, I've been able to prepare for the liturgical seasons in a new way. Instead of being taken off guard that a new season – currently Advent – is upon us, I get to spend a few extra weeks planning for what I want this season to look like.

One thing I've been pondering recently is how Advent is the beginning of the liturgical new year. In a very real way, the first Sunday in Advent is liturgically New Year's Day. But do we treat it so, and how should we approach it?

Now, there is a lot that could be mistaken by calling the beginning of Advent our Catholic New Year. I don't mean that you should start a fad diet to prepare for Christmas feasting. But that doesn't mean you can't [include a little fasting during this season](#); Advent is a penitential season, though not to the same degree as Lent.

While writing this article, I decided to look up the most common New Year's resolutions. One list said these were the top 10: exercise more, lose weight, get organized, learn a new skill or hobby, live life to the fullest, save more money/spend less money, quit smoking, spend more time with family and friends, travel more and read more.

So, here's what I propose. What if we took these resolutions and gave them a sacred spin? Here are some ideas.

1. Exercise more. We are body and soul. Our health is

important. What change can you make to honor your body the way God desires you to?

2. Lose weight. What about the weight of your sins? Consider going to confession before Christmas – and frequently throughout the year – to unburden yourself from the things that are not of God.

3. Get organized. How's your prayer life? Look at your schedule for each day the night before and plan for when you are going to spend some time – even five minutes – with the Lord.

4. Learn a new skill or hobby. What form of prayer have you always wanted to try? Reading Scripture, journaling, adoration, daily Mass, imaginative prayer, the Rosary, etc.? Make a plan for how to incorporate it into your daily or weekly routine.

5. Save more money/spend less money. Are you generous with your money? Maybe look into spending less on yourself and more on others, whether that be friends and family or charitable organizations.

6. Quit smoking. We all have at least one bad habit we excuse but would love to give up. Whatever it is, ask God for the grace to move away from it and, again, make a plan.

7. Travel more. When was the last time you visited Jesus in adoration? Or went to Mass on a day other than Sunday? Try to visit him a bit more frequently.

8. Read more. Pick up a spiritual classic this Advent. If you want something to prepare you for Christmas, it's not too late to get your copy of ["Oriens"](#) from the OSV bookstore, which also has a [beautiful selection of classics](#) to choose from.

9. Spend more time with family and friends. Consider hosting people during Advent to celebrate some of the pre-Christmas

feast days. Some big ones include St. Nicholas (Dec. 6), the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8, which is also a holy day of obligation), Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12) and St. Lucy (Dec. 13). Continue this tradition with favorite feasts throughout the liturgical year.

10. Live life to the fullest. Living a full life does not mean being busy. It doesn't mean being perfect. It means being intentional about what matters, which, ultimately, is our relationship with Our Lord and bringing as many people with us to heaven as we possibly can.

We were made for heaven. This life is about getting there – not as a prize but because we come to love above all else the one who resides there: God himself. But [what is keeping you from heaven?](#) Let Advent be an opportunity to reset our lives to focus on what truly matters.

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