

2008:

A New Year On The Spiritual Treadmill

We all know the routine. It's as ancient as the calendar. As a new year approaches, thoughts turn to resolutions filled with lofty ambitions and unrealistic goals. Diets, physical checkups on a more frequent basis, improvement of spending habits, and the ever-popular choice that tops the charts, exercise, are perennial favorites which most likely will never start, let alone allowed to fade away within a few months.

It's no different with other aspects of life, in particular, our developing a greater relationship with God, a deeper spirituality, or a stronger live-out faith. "We're going to make sure we attend mass every weekend." "I'm committing myself to fifteen minutes of bible reading each morning before work." "It's time to take opportunities to attend classes that will help me grow in a mature understanding of God."

We jump on and off the spiritual treadmill as readily as we do with that big bulky piece of equipment in our bedroom so cluttered with clothes and empty shoes.

What will it be this year?

MAKE IT GOOD!

Lent begins just five weeks into the new year. So if we've "fallen off the proverbial wagon" and already faltered in our resolutions, we can start again, work with more diligence, and hope to maintain at least a small amount of discipline until Lent. Then we can use Lent as the booster shot of personal spiritual renewal.

Practicing the Prayer of Awareness of the Presence of God can be nurtured through one of many disciplines that will carry us to, and then through Lent. By Easter, we'll have eleven weeks of regimentation enabling us to maintain a consistency.

On the other hand, if you do something only for Lent, with the mentality that you'll return to your normal ways when Easter comes, there's no purpose in doing anything at all.

So how about placing a few of these Christian principles in the structure of your life as New Years resolutions and Lenten disciplines?

1) *As I encounter a person — friend or otherwise — I'll say a prayer asking God's presence to be*

seen in that person.

2) *As I speak of another, I will remember that we are brothers and/or sisters in Christ, sharing in the oneness of God and the Body of Christ.*



3) *I will refrain from entering into any conversation which is not uplifting and beneficial for all persons.*

4) *I will stop partaking in any gossip at the risk of upsetting friends, so to find Christ.*

5) *If my schedule allows, I will add at least one mass a week to my*

routine, and use this prayer time for lifting up others' needs in prayer rather than my own.

6) *Our family will spend additional time in prayer, learning various prayers of the*

Church, and/or attending special services.

7) *I'll not make the busyness of my schedule as an excuse for missing prayers throughout the day at set times.*

8) *I'll stop living according to the old law, doing things because they are mandatory, and begin living the Law of Love espoused by Jesus Christ, taking on a new desire within my own life.*

9) *I'll seek to find God's kingdom alive in every aspect of life, realizing that everything is of God and cannot exist without God.*

10) *I'll attend one of the upcoming evenings to receive clarification on the Practice of being aware of the Presence of God in my life.*

Knowing God's Presence **Is Living In God's Kingdom**

There are others, many others that can become part of life. Again, they will challenge us to step out of the comfort zone we have placed ourselves in over the past years. Friendships may be challenged due to the spiritual awakening that may take place within you and cause change in how you respond to life.

As we hear in the first letter of St. John, "No one who sins, knows God." To know God is to avoid sin, and recognize that we are living in the presence of God — which we call "The Kingdom."

GOD FIRST

Year Two, Part 19

The Prayer of Awareness

