

✉ (#email) 🐦 (/#twitter) 📘 (/#facebook) 📄

➕ (<https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncregister.com%2Ffeatures%2Fholy-habits-20-new-year-s-resolutions&title=Holy%20Habits%3A%2020%20New%20Year%E2%80%99s%20Resolutions%7C%20National%20Catholic%20Register>)

Holy Habits: 20 New Year's Resolutions

COLUMN: How to get 2021 started on the right spiritual foot.



Making more time for prayer, including unexpected moments, is a good resolution for a prayerful 2021. (photo: Unsplash)

Patti Maguire Armstrong (<https://www.ncregister.com/author/patti-maguire-armstrong>) | Features (/section/features) | December 27, 2020

Goodbye 2020! It has been rough. The year actually incentivized making a good New Year's resolution. And by good, I mean holy. The world has always let us down — more so in 2020 — but we know that God has something better for us.

Set goals for self-improvement in this world — such as exercise or quitting smoking — but then, go deeper, down to your soul, and consider ways to grow stronger and closer to God in 2021. Creating holy habits is what inspired me to write *Holy Hacks: Everyday Ways to Live Your Faith and Get to Heaven* to expand our capacity for holiness while going about the day. Through this approach, our resolutions can pick up speed throughout 2021 as new behaviors easily become habits. Here are some ideas.

1. *Give a return on your gifts.* When using a gift, say a prayer for the giver. For instance, I say a Hail Mary for the person who gave me a geranium every time I water it. When using clothing or jewelry someone gave you, say a pray for the giver.

2. *Commit random acts of prayer.* Pick someone to pray for throughout your day. It could a politician you hear promoting abortion, or someone in a passing car, or a shopper in the grocery line. If someone cuts you off in traffic, pray for them, and your anger will subside, and you will both be
We've updated our privacy policy. You can see the details here (<http://www.ncregister.com/info/ncr-privacy-policy>).
Close this notice. We will have a setting in your browser to keep it from showing again.

blessed.

3. *See Jesus more often.* Make a weekly appointment to visit Jesus in the tabernacle. The more time you spend with Jesus, the more he can give to you.

4. *Bounce-back.* As kids we used to say: "I'm rubber, and you're glue; whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you." Think of God telling us: "I'm God, and I made you; whatever you do for others comes back to you." Jesus told us: "The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:10).

5. *Become invisible.* Look for invisible ways to do good. Skip over a parking spot near the door and pray for the one who will park there instead of you. Put away a shopping cart and pray for the one who left it and the next shopper to use it. "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

6. *Read the Word.* Put a Bible somewhere convenient, and open it up once a day.

7. *Call the manager and praise an employee.* When you've been given good service, call the manager and report it. It will make that employee's day. For a bonus, say a prayer for them.

8. *Ask God to arrange your seating and conversations.* I know people (and myself) who have had amazing experiences asking God to direct who we sit next to at events or on planes and to direct our conversations (even when socially distanced). Try it, and I think you will be surprised.

9. *Fast daily.* Jesus fasted for 40 days before beginning his ministry. To integrate fasting into a daily sacrifice, take something out at meals. Skip the fries or ketchup, or don't put butter on your bread. I'm not suggesting omitting a more serious fast, but why not tap into the power daily?

10. *Enjoy the wait.* What do you do while waiting for the microwave or while waiting for someone to answer their phone? Turn inconsequential moments into prayers of consequence.

11. *End your purchase with a surprise.* "Thank you, and have a good day" is so ordinary that cashiers barely hear it. Try saying, "Thank you, and God bless you" with heartfelt expression. They will hear you, usually smile and sometimes respond: "God bless you, too!"

12. *Use sirens and flashing lights as prayer signals.* Pray for the person needing the ambulance speeding by and also for whomever is at the end of a police call. For whatever reasons, they could use some extra prayers.

13. *Forget about yourself.* Humility leads to holiness. Avoid correcting others if it doesn't matter. Be last in line. Thank God for failure, and ask him to lead you to what he wants for you.

14. *Talk to people no one can see.* Get to know the saint of the day, and ask him or her to pray for you.

15. *Give away something you love.* It's fine to donate the things you don't use, but occasionally give away a favorite item. It's the difference between Cain and Abel's offerings to God.

16. *Wear a crucifix.* It's a silent witness to Jesus' love and sacrifice.

17. *Fast some more.* Take a day to give up something like coffee, wearing jewelry or makeup, going on social media, or whatever.

18. *Have a no-complaint day.* Dedicate an entire day each week to not complaining. Weather counts.

19. *Do a house blessing.* Ask a priest to bless your house in 2021.

20. *Give unexpected gifts.* Release someone from a debt, anonymously give a gift card or money to someone on hard times, or send a pizza or baked goods to a police station or to a nursing home or to hospital employees or to a big family.

We're using cookies to improve your experience. You can see the details here (<http://www.ncregis.com/privacy-policy>).

Close this notice (we will save a setting in your browser to keep it from showing again).

Have a happy and holy 2021!

Keywords: new year's resolutions (<https://www.ncregister.com/tag/new-years-resolutions>)
holy habits (<https://www.ncregister.com/tag/holy-habits>) holy hacks (<https://www.ncregister.com/tag/holy-hacks>)



Patti Maguire Armstrong (<https://www.ncregister.com/author/patti-maguire-armstrong>) Patti Maguire Armstrong is an award-winning author and was the managing editor and co-author of Ascension Press' bestselling *Amazing Grace Series* (<https://ascensionpress.com/shop/t/category/books-and-pamphlets/amazing-grace-series>) . Her newest books are *Holy Hacks: Everyday Ways to Live Your Faith & Get to Heaven* (<https://www.avemariapress.com/product/1-59471-887-3/Holy-Hacks/>) and *Big Hearted: Inspiring Stories from Everyday Families* (<https://scepterpublishers.org/products/big-hearted-inspiring-stories-from-everyday-families>) . She has a B.A. in social work and M.A. in public administration and worked in both those fields before staying home to work as a freelance writer. Patti and her husband, Mark, live in North Dakota, where they are still raising the tail end of their 10 children. Follow her on Twitter at @PattiArmstrong and read her blog at PattiMaguireArmstrong.com.

Show Comments 16

Related Stories

Latest News

Blogs



17 New Year's Resolutions from Jonathan Swift (<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/jonathan-swift-resolutions>)

In 1699, at the age of 32, the famous writer compiled 17 personal resolutions in a list he called, "When I come to be old."

Kathy Schiffer (<https://www.ncregister.com/author/kathy-schiffer>) | Blogs

0 (https://www.ncregister.com/blog/jonathan-swift-resolutions#coral_thread)

We've updated our privacy policy. You can see the details here (<http://www.ncregister.com/info/ncr-privacy-policy>).

Close this notice (we will save a setting in your browser to keep it from showing again).