



A Fresh Start

Every year around January we hear a great deal about making a fresh start with New Year's resolutions. Many people see the beginning of the new year as a time to evaluate their lives and to make certain changes.

One problem with most New Year's resolutions, however, is that they often don't last very long. While people have the best intentions when making their pledges for the coming year, they don't always follow through. Sometimes they don't realize how difficult the changes are to make, sometimes they become too busy, and sometimes they just plain forget.

This year, as many others around us make New Year's resolutions, we Orthodox Christians can do something similar. With the idea of starting fresh in the new year, we can renew our commitment to grow closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Church provides many opportunities to help us achieve this goal. Perhaps the most important is attending the Divine Liturgy. By making sure that we are in church each Sunday morning we express our desire to have God in our lives. Further, it is important for us to prepare ourselves during the week so that we can receive Holy Communion on Sunday. We do this through reading the Bible, prayer, fasting, and confession. Participating in these practices, we strengthen our relationship with our Lord and fulfill our commitment to grow closer to Him.

Now our greatest challenge becomes making our commitment to God different from the resolutions that many people make. Instead of giving up, setting aside, or forgetting our vow, we must make our pledge a priority in our lives. We must make a fresh start, and then continue our spiritual growth throughout the coming year and always.

May God bless you with a happy and healthy new year!