

Father John Catoir

# Happy New Year

There's one New Year's resolution I'd like you to consider making. No matter what your state of health or wealth, do yourself a favor. Decide to be inwardly happy.

It can be done. You may have to work at it, but once you begin to think positively your life will take on a new luster. Believe in the wisdom of the sacred scripture: "A cheerful heart is the best medicine." (Proverbs 17:22)



Happiness is not something to be grasped directly, the way you would take an apple off a tree. Happiness is the by-product of a meaningful life. It is something attained indirectly through the process of correct thinking.

You can transform an unhappy disposition into a happy one. The choices you make and the thoughts you allow yourself to think are key factors in the process. Clearing the mind and heart of anxiety and resentment is the first step. It makes no sense to be needlessly weighed down by negative thoughts and feelings.

The words of Jesus teach us the way: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you ... do not judge ... forgive seventy times seven." If we could only do what Jesus asks we'd be happier, freer, and more joyful human beings. He wants this for everyone of us. "I have told you all these things that your joy may be full." (John 15:11)

The Lord is not asking us to be phony. It isn't merely a question of putting on a happy face, something difficult to do in times of economic depression or loss of employment.

He simply says, "Be not anxious ... Your Heavenly Father knows all your needs." His words stand against self-pity, fear and resentment, offering us a serene wisdom to nourish our soul.

So it is not a question of pretending to be what you are not. Rather, it is choosing to be happy, because a grateful heart gives honor to God.

I once heard someone say, "I am poor and I am in pain, but I am the happiest of men." He wasn't insane, he was simply in charge of his own inner life. He decided to be happy because of the knowledge of God's love, and no one was going to take that happiness from him.

Here are a few more quotes from Scripture to encourage you to make a New Year's resolution which will help you achieve a more positive spirituality:

"Your decrees, O Lord, are my eternal heritage, they are the joy of my heart." (Psalm 119:111)

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and all things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

"...I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you." (John 16:22)

"The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

Claim happiness as your birthright, and have a happy New Year.

*[For a free copy of the Christopher News Note, Spirituality, happiness and health, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 East 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]*