

A New Year

JANUARY 2021 ISSUE



birthdays

please pray and remember them! send love & wishes!

January 23

Jeric Aguzar

January 25

Jessica Vu

for next month...
February 26 - Daniel Tran

“Time will remain frozen, unless we start our new year through Jesus Christ.”

As we end one year and spring forward to a new year, we pause to take “inventory”. New Year is the time to set new goals and make resolutions. While we are called upon to have a spiritual reflection on gratitude, we should also take this opportunity to make an honest self-assessment to learn from our past mistakes and let it be our lessons in hope for changes to better ourselves in the coming year. Our choices make us become the persons we become. In our choosing, we not only have the potential to change the world around us, we change ourselves. Because our ability to choose is so fractured by our sins, we are prone to making the wrong choices in our daily lives. We need God. As capable as we think we may be, we need God to wield His mighty arm in our lives. We need to be mindful and humble ourselves to God. For he’s the One who makes all things possible. He’s the One who makes all things new.

One of my favorite pastimes on New Year’s day is family gathering to reminisce on the past year. Looking back, family and I are very grateful for God’s helping hand in our lives for all of our blessings. We have health...we have shelter...we have food...we still have our sanity...and most important, we have each other - a family to have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death us do part. Certainly, we recognize our need for God and pray that He will walk with us through our difficulties and renew our strength and courage to take those steps we regretfully missed in the past. To many, including myself, God may seem far away at times, but He is not. It is evidenced in His deliverance at our worst of time. With the current pandemic situation, my family and I try to stay closely connected to Christ to rejuvenate our human spirit and to help us live out the right values. We learn that it’s not healthy to dwell on our resentments toward those who have offended us, and pray for some compassion to forgive in an effort to break free from the bitterness before starting the new year. And of course, we also reflect on ourselves to seek forgiveness from those who we have offended so that we find peace in our hearts to move on from our guilt to start a clean slate in the new year.

When we follow Christ, we are on the path that moves forward and upward. No more slip-sliding backwards. In essence, we redeem our gift of time from God. For time is frozen unless we start our new year through Jesus Christ. With that being said, let’s make our new year resolution to let go and let God. Let God turn the page on the old way of life and embrace a new one. Happy New Year...and happy new beginnings! Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ!

Jennie Le | Catechist

confirmation events & dates

C1

Feb 14 - NO CLASS
Feb 17 - Lent Begins
Feb 28 - Saint Reports Final Drafts & Sponsor Forms DUE

Hope you had a wonderful start to the new year! Wishing everyone the best of luck and health. Stay safe!

C2

Jan 31 - Bishop Letters Final Draft DUE
*Please have them turned in before the end of the month!
Feb 10 - Sponsor Interviews DUE
Feb 14 - NO CLASS
Feb 17 - Lent Begins

Hope you had a wonderful start to the new year! Wishing everyone the best of luck and health. Stay safe!

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OFF TO A GREAT START: WHAT IS GOD'S WORD?

Bible in a Year

WRITTEN BY NORMAN & LENA

Are you ready to start your new year's resolution of getting smarter? Well, you can begin with **Fr. Mike's Bible in a Year** podcast! Ranked as the #1 ranked podcast in Apple's Podcast store for 14 consecutive days, and quickly climbing up Spotify's top 160 podcasts, it provides all Catholics with the opportunity to experience the word of God in a whole new way. One common worry that some have when reading sacred scripture is how to interpret it. Through scriptural commentary, Fr. Mike clarifies any misconceptions that the bible isn't meant to be read as an absolute anthology of symbolic books or a history textbook, but as a sacred text through the Church's eyes.

The Holy Bible might seem intimidating and boring, but don't worry; Fr. Mike breaks down the liturgy to be understandable and, dare I say, interesting! From juicy gossip to fascinating historical facts, this podcast has it all while shining light on God's mercy and plan for salvation. The podcast is formatted into two distinct sections.

- (1) The sacred scripture
- (2) Commentary on the scripture.

The schedule for the readings comes from Jeff Cavins. Each episode will go over the Old Testament and/or New Testament scripture in manageable portions. It is through the scripture and commentary on our tradition where the word of God comes to life! Saint Jerome is famously quoted saying "Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ." This only makes sense when we read and understand that God didn't just come down from heaven, but "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The savior that was prophesied in the Old Testament to save us all was God Himself. It is through the 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament where God's plan for our salvation comes alive. Give episode one a try and you'll find out for yourself how fruitful this will be!

More information about the podcast may be found at:
<https://tinyurl.com/y2zczkka>



THE BIBLE
IN A YEAR

WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ, FEATURING JEFF CAVINS



CATHOLICS AND THE BIBLE

W/ FR. MIKE SCHMITZ & JEFF CAVINS

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEW BEGINNINGS

which crazy event that happened in 2020 would you wish to change?

About 10 months ago when we first went on lockdown, my sister came home really sick and had all the signs of Covid. The first thing we did was get her tested. Since she didn't have Covid, we didn't know what was wrong with her, so my parents took her to see our pediatrician. She was diagnosed with pneumonia and put on antibiotics for a few weeks. After those weeks went by, she was feeling much better but still had a very juicy cough and wasn't able to breathe. My parents took her back to the doctor, who referred her to Pulmonology, a person that specializes in respiratory. That doctor wasn't able to figure out what was wrong so she was referred to an ENT, a person that specializes in ears, nose, and throat. He figured out there was a bunch of snot built up and she wasn't able to blow it out. It was built up in all 8 of her sinus cavities, and she was in need for sinus surgery. That surgery made her breathe a lot better but she still had a really bad cough, so the doctor referred her to a cardio, a person that studies the heart and lungs. The ENT thought her cough might be heart related, but all the tests the cardio ran came out negative. Lastly she was referred to an immunologist/allergist, a person that studies immune systems that protects the living organism. To see this doctor she needed a lot of Covid tests and lots of tests were run. 10 months and 11 Covid tests (which were all negative) later, the doctor finally diagnosed her for Aspergillus, a fungus in her lungs, and Candida disease, yeast that grows to crest the fungus. I wish that this would have never happened because since Covid attacks the lungs, my sister and I were both pulled from softball and I hate seeing my 11 year old sister having to do all of these tests and surgeries. Since she was diagnosed with a lung condition, my family was put onto an extreme lockdown because if my little sister were to get Covid, I don't know what would happen to her.

Danica Jimenez | Confirmation 1 Student

If I had to choose a singular event to change in 2020 it would definitely have to be the spread of the COVID-19 virus. COVID-19 was the central cause of most of 2020's problems and has left our lives in disarray and made 2020 the most uncertain year in recent history. COVID started in China as a novel virus to be feared. But over time it has spread throughout the world as its hosts travel abroad. COVID has brought so many people grief and anxiety as it proliferated throughout the world. So many people have died from this terrible disease and many others have been affected by it or know someone who has. Even now in 2021 COVID goes on. Currently, in the US alone there have been 2.75 million cases and over 300,000 deaths; may they rest in peace. COVID not only took so many people's loved ones away, but it also forced us to not be able to see the loved ones that were still with us. Social distancing and quarantine became the new norm and we may never have the old normal back. COVID has shut down public events, schools, companies, and even churches and other religious congregations. With all of these harmful outcomes, it is hard to imagine a better event to change. If COVID never happened 2020 could've been the year that everyone was hoping for, a year of joy and hope. Not one the one of grief and despair that we received. Having said that God is still with us and we shouldn't lose hope, we should still honor and grieve those that we have lost, but we have to look forward. With the vaccine now developed, we can maybe return to the old normal that we all crave. One day we can leave our houses and not be afraid of contracting COVID. One day we can meet with our friends and family again. One day we can get back to work, back to school, and back to church. One day we can all praise God together as brothers and sisters again and we can pray for the souls of the dearly departed together.

Kenrich Nguyen | Confirmation 1 Student

LET'S TALK: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

what is a lesson you learned in 2020 that you may want to improve on or change yourself for the better in 2021?

2020 was a challenging year for many people because the COVID-19 pandemic changed every aspect of our lives. In 2020 many of us were forced into quarantine to prevent spreading the disease, so we do not attend school in person and hang out with our friends and families. We also had to discover methods to adapt to our new lifestyle to the period of quarantining at home. These things mean that we have to determine how to quarantine at home, find ways to communicate and get in touch with loved ones, deal with stress, and take on the challenges that the pandemic presented to us. Many of us would consider that last year was a terrible, tragic, and sad year. However, 2020 taught me a valuable lesson that I want to improve on in 2021. I learned to adapt to changes in life, stay positive, and move forward. 2020 might have been an awful year, but focusing on all the negative things was not healthy. Sometimes, I need to appreciate and admire the little things because there's always some good when there's bad. One of my highlights of 2020 was hanging out with friends in group chats and playing video games together when we had free time. Even though the pandemic separated my friends and me, we found ways to be together digitally if we couldn't get together in-person. We were able to shine some light into this dark moment for humanity. From reflecting on my experiences in 2020, I recognized that there were still positive things despite all the horrible stuff. I spent time in group chats with friends, I became closer to my family, I met new people online, and I was able to survive. In 2021, I want to improve myself by adapting to any changes and keeping a positive mindset.

Kevin Pham | Confirmation 1 Student

A new year is a new beginning. It is a time to reflect on our gratitude for the past and our hope for the future. It is also a chance to change ourselves and have a fresh start to chase our dreams. The year 2020 has been a rollercoaster for the entire world. Since the coronavirus outbreak, there had been many stress and hardships we encountered. However, in the midst of distress, there are also some good and valuable lessons we learned from that year and we could bring with us in the year 2021. Out of all the lessons I learned in 2020, the most valuable lesson that I would want to change myself for this year is to not take my family and friends for granted. 2020 has taught me to count my blessings, take nothing for granted, and be content with what I already have. I want to cherish my families and friends and once the coronavirus pandemic is over, I hope to spend more time with my family by creating new memories. For instance, I could have more family dinners, family walks, genuine conversations about how everyone is doing, and family movie nights. In doing this, I am able to strengthen and unify my relationship with my family and friends. The pandemic has limited the time I could spend with my friends and relatives, but at the same time, has reinforced my bond with my close family. 2020 has cleared up the fog for me and helped me realize to not take my loved ones for granted because you never know what's around the corner or what the next day holds for me and my family. Overall, I hope that in 2021, I am able to apply the lessons I learned from last year into my daily life.

Trisha Nguyen | Confirmation 1 Student



NEW YEAR, NEW CONNECTIONS: FINDING YOURSELF

how have the gifts of the holy spirit helped or renewed your faith?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit have helped me, not only in my everyday life, but also in my faith journey. The Gift of Wisdom and Fear of the Lord have played a significant part in the approach to my faith. Starting from when I began placing myself in the mindset that I follow God because of his mercy, grace, and greatness, I began to sincerely trust and love him more. The Gift of Fear allowed me to come to a realization that I wanted to love and trust Him, not because of my family or because I was forced to, but because I respected and believed in His existence in my own life. Although that realization did not come until recently, it has helped me take my faith more seriously than I had before.

The Gift of Wisdom and the Gift of Understanding are gifts that helped me become closer to God; they helped me embrace my faith as well as God's teachings. When I was younger, I attended mass for the sake of pleasing my parents; I could not find the meaning in the scriptures that were read and I could not understand the significance of my presence or why I had to be there. But, as I grew up, I became aware of how important mass was after learning the meaning behind it. Still, I did not go to mass for the sake of becoming closer to God. However, when the epidemic became more contagious and various activities became limited or restricted, I came to realize the importance of mass for my soul. Although my family prays together on most days and at least once a week, I became conscious of the effects of missing mass. I drifted away from God much more than I thought. The Gifts of Wisdom and Understanding resurfaced in me during this difficult time. I became more motivated to understand the weekly Gospel and I began choosing better choices that my conscience leads me to.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit has helped me renew my faith through various circumstances. More specifically, the Gifts of Fear, Wisdom, and Understanding has allowed me to see God in a different perspective, which has guided me to open my heart to understand and respect him.

Lan Vu | Confirmation 1 Student

what have you gained going into 2021?

"I have gained new friends and the realization that I should cherish all of the moments with my friends and family because the moments do not last forever" -Allyson Burrue

"I have gained a sense of realization when I am about to make a mistake such as saying or doing something I shouldn't be doing" -Krystal Le

"I have gained much more patience when dealing with others, and treat others more kindly" -Theresa Duong

"I have gained further appreciation for what I have. I know that I live a privileged life, having the education and simple need such as a house and food in my life" -Natalie Tran

what have you lost going into 2021?

"I've lost motivation going into 2021... my lack of motivation causes me to be more fatigue and procrastinate more. I used to be so lively and outgoing but now I feel sick (mentally) and vulnerable" -Catherine Nguyen

"My grandfather and many of my friends" -Misty Phan

"My tan. I miss being active and playing community sports" -Kathleen Nguyen

"I've lost some friends since March of 2020 to now. Even though I have their contact information, I don't really text anyone. I prefer seeing and talking in person" -Amanda Cao

IN THE EYES OF CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

my faith journey

WHAT IS GOD CALLING YOU TO DO?

"Vocation. A spiritual calling from God. A vocation is something that can come at any time in different ways, and your response to receiving a vocation can be different from how others may respond to it. I may receive a vocation, but be too busy with the present to follow through with it. Some challenges that I may face when discerning my vocation and call towards holiness is my lack of understanding and being able to properly understand what God is trying to tell me. This is something that I often have trouble with because it's hard for me to understand the message of God. It might be because I'm not fully devoting myself to God or it could be I'm not trying hard enough to try and understand. Whatever the reason might be, I hope that in the very near future I could be able to fully understand God's message or command for me. I tend to be very distracted and a little self-deprecating when it comes to not being able to understand God. Like I tend to doubt myself and list down reasons why I might not be able to understand and go through God's plans, I however know that this is probably not true. But I do hope that I would be able to understand God's plans during tough times that I may go through. By praying, I can communicate with God and Jesus and ask how I can better myself and help others that might stray away from the path God guides them to be on. God is calling me to be a person loving everyone, a person helping others, and to always listen to whatever message or command God may send my way.

We learned about Mother Mary and the call that she received to learn that she is going to conceive Jesus, the son of God. Then about the challenges that she faced such as almost having a silent divorce, and being pregnant before actually getting married. That was considered shameful and she could be stoned if the public found out. But Mother Mary along with Joseph decided not to divorce, and raise Jesus even with all the challenges that they had during her pregnancy and the delivery. And her "Yes" to accept the message from God, is a "yes" that we should also follow."

Amanda Cao | Confirmation 1 Student



want to be featured in the next newsletter?

Don't worry, you will **always** have a chance to be in the student spotlight! Be on the lookout for the next newsletter Google forms survey.

Students who write thoughtful, strong reflections will be chosen and counted for **1 hour of parish community service** for their service hours.

Not all submissions will be guaranteed.

Need help finding the surveys or updates? For more info or to view previous newsletters, please visit: www.saintcolumbanym.org.



IN THE EYES OF CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

my faith journey

WHAT IS GOD CALLING YOU TO DO?

“God’s plan for me is not exactly obvious, but I recognize that He will guide me into following the righteous path to Heaven. I can prepare the way for Jesus’ coming by performing acts of kindness. Additionally, I can ask God for forgiveness and redirect my life toward the devoted path to everlasting life. Essentially, God is calling me to be a faithful and dedicated disciple. Furthermore, He wishes for me to decide on the vocation that I would like to take on. However, I do realize that I will have to face many challenges in life. An obstacle that I confront while discerning my vocation and call toward holiness is my attainment of being indecisive. In addition to that, I possess a sense of cluelessness as to what I want in life. I am uncertain of which vocation I would like to pursue and whether or not it would be God’s calling for me to fulfill.

Despite the impediments, we are called to be living witnesses of the Gospel as people of the Catholic family. These interruptions can bring forth moments of grace because it requires me to spend time in order to truly reflect on everything that is occurring in my life. I can realize my inadequacies and strive to find solutions that can allow me to grow as a better individual. Last month’s guest speaker, Manny, discussed the topics of courage and overcoming setbacks. Courage is the willingness to persevere and withstand the difficulties presented in life. Having this in mind, the true definition of being a Eucharistic community is the wanting to come together in the name of God because of our belonging to the Church. Therefore, as members of the Church, we gather to receive, celebrate, and share this one Body of Christ. As part of the Body of Christ, we have forgotten and failed to love as Jesus has done when we become so absorbed in our own lives. People tend to be ignorant and negative when life gets a hold of them. The struggles in life cause us to forget to express our love to others. In the end, everyone is called to be a disciple of God and attains the duty of following the Church’s teachings. We are able to unify as one Eucharistic community!”

Katherine Nguyen | Confirmation 1 Student

choose ONE thing that you did in 2020. if you could do it again in 2021, what would it be?

“One thing I wish I could do again in 2021 is to have my dance show again with my dance friends at school” -Ruby Bui

“Having sleepovers with cousins”
-Hannah Luu

“Watch movies with my sister. I love spending time with her” -Fatima Zaragoza

“I was able to get better grades in 2020 because I wasn’t so distracted with sports”
-Serrena Brito

“Although 2020 was not the greatest year, one thing I would do again in 2021 is practice affirmations which I’ve began recently”
-Emily Nguyen

“If I could do something again in 2021, it would be hoping we would go back to school soon” -Wesley Huynh

prayer intentions

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED OF LOVE,
HOPE, AND FAITH! WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

“Help guide us step closer to your internal kingdom of heaven especially during this tough time of isolation. Help us remember that you will always be there to listen to us when we pray to you and help us remember those of our dear ones who have passed away”

“Con cầu xin Chúa cho gia đình chúng con và tất cả mọi người trên toàn thế giới luôn được khỏe mạnh và bình an. Con tạ ơn Chúa”

“Xin cầu nguyện cho các linh hồn ông bà tổ tiên nội ngoại đã qua đời. Xin cho các con biết ngoan ngoãn và vâng lời bố mẹ”

“Peace on earth. Love ones and friends find happiness and peace inside. All hungry children around the world have food and clean water everyday. All nation leaders know how to collaborate together to make the earth and people's lives better and more secure. Holy Spirit, please stay with me and my family to guide us on every action next week. Amen”

“I wish to pray for my friend's family, as recently his mother was diagnosed with pre-breast cancer. I hope that my prayers will be received by God and I hope that they will receive safety and happiness in the near future. I also wish to pray for the people who are currently going through a rough time during quarantine because I know it is very hard to stay happy when our entire lives have changed”

“I would like to pray for my friend, Andrew Bui, who was recently diagnosed with cancer and will be starting treatment in January. I pray that God be with him during this difficult time and help him through the physical and mental struggles ahead”

“Maria Tran Thi Lu, Maria Pham Thi Tin, Gioan Baotixita Nguyen Van Huynh”

“I would like to thank God for providing me with a supportive family and many amazing friends as well as allowing me to have good health, especially during these times”

“Lord we will pray and help others in need during this pandemic that you hear our prayers to give us health and strength to carry out your will”

“Offering a prayer for families to get through this time, Pray for lenh hong Vincent”

do you have a prayer?

all prayers intentions will be made aware by the St. Columban ministry and Confirmation program.
all prayers intentions here have been made anonymous. if preferred to release names, please state otherwise.
not all prayer intentions will be guaranteed to be in next month's newsletter.
for more information, please visit: <https://saintcolumbanym.org/prayer/>