

## **FOR THE GOOD OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

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### **THE MAKING OF A NEW YEAR**

The New Year is ushered in with a variety of traditions, - some better than others. In New York's Times Square, a crystal ball descends; and the crowds cheer as if to greet a clean slate on which to write the next 12 months of one's life. As midnight scurries across our nation, people raise their glasses at the right moment in hopes that the next year will be better. At the Bishop's Residence, we ring a bell to gather for the celebration of our first Holy Mass for the New Year.

My cousin in the Republic of Slovakia, where they are six hours ahead of us, calls to report on the New Year's progress there. It is something like getting a call from the future, - someone in 2009 getting a call from someone who is already in 2010. Would not that be wonderful, - if in "real time", someone from the future could inform us of what is coming our way!

On the one hand, it would not be good. Worrying about it could occupy most of our time. But, on the other hand, we might avoid making the mistakes that others have made, once we got to that point.

That, of course, presumes that we learn by mistakes. Do we allow history to teach us? It is the past that informs us. We are the ones that inform the future. When you think about it, is not all of this New Year's celebrating about the old year, rather than the new one? We recall the good times and rejoice that we survived the bad.

If we could but be serious about repeating the good and avoiding the bad (at least, to the extent that we have control), we would be helping to fashion a better year. I guess that is what New Year's Day Resolutions are all about. Although, it does not appear that too many people are that serious about them. Unfortunately, by February, we have already given up.

Some families still have a calendar or two on the wall (or refrigerator). In the square occupied by each date, they write in what happened on that particular day. It serves as a family diary. It might be good if each of us personally had such a calendar. There, we could jot down not so much what happened but, rather, how we reacted to what happened. Many people "journal." But, for me, that's too much effort.

What I suggest could be done with such a calendar is use it again the following year. As we would come upon each day a year later, we would see how well we did. Then, we could avoid the failings of our past and repeat the good that we had done.

This is not like a call from the future to warn of what is coming. Rather, it is a "call from the past" and is more realistic. The New Year will not be much different for us than was the old, - unless we choose to make it new. As my Spiritual Director often reminds me, that happens by paying attention to the present.

So, as we begin the New Year 2010, I suggest that we concentrate on each day and do the best that we can. The rest of the year, we leave to the Lord's care. May that bring us all a very Blessed New Year 2010!