

January 5, 2016

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

At the start of a new year, many people make resolutions. They intend to exercise more and eat less; get their lives organized; not worry as much.

Their hope is to make a change for the better and find greater fulfillment in the year ahead.

Usually, I do not make resolutions, but recently, I came across this list from Father James Martin, a well-known Jesuit writer. It is his "New Year's Resolutions for Everyone," and I think, if I were to make some resolutions for 2016, these would probably do:

1) Be Kind. That means...

2) Always give everyone the benefit of the doubt. After all, why not? Everyone is carrying around some sort of burden. Usually one that you don't even know about. So give them a break.

3) Don't be a jerk. There is simply no need to be. At all. Zero. Just because you're having a rotten day doesn't mean you have to pass it along your misery to someone else. It's important to share your struggles with friends. Essential. But being in a bad mood is no excuse to be a jerk.

4) Give a call, pay a visit, or send a note to someone who you know is sick, lonely, struggling. It will cost you nothing, but will mean everything to them. Think of how you feel when someone reaches out.

5) Release yourself from that grudge. In other words, forgive. It's ridiculous to hold onto things for so long. It eats away at you like a cancer... You think you are justified in being mad? You probably are. People can be jerks. But there are probably people justified in holding a grudge against you, too. So just let it go.

6) Listen patiently to someone who is long-winded, or boring, or, especially complaining. They're usually insecure, lonely or in pain. Your listening is a gift to them. It may mean that you're the only person they have to talk to. Yes, it's hard. But God sees what you're doing. And, after all, people have to listen to you.

7) Help someone who is really needy. A homeless person. A poor person. A refugee. A sick person. A grieving person. It's not hard to figure out how to do it. And if you don't know anyone like that, write a check. That's not so hard either. Helping doesn't require an advanced degree.

8) Be kind. Did I mention that? It bears repeating, because if you are kind, then you'll make a lot of people happy in the New Year. Yourself too. And God.

Want to join me?

See you in church,
Andrew