

The morning offering: A New Year's resolution for all

What is the first thought that enters your mind when you wake up? Is it what you watched last night on television or what you have to do at work that day? Is it your spouse or children? Do you reach for your phone and check Facebook or email? Or, do you thank God for the new day and resolve to live that day in union with God?

Our first thought of the day reveals a lot about our priorities, what is important to us, and what is on our mind. It also sets the tone of the day. That's why the morning offering is so important to a vibrant spiritual life.

For years, I struggled making a morning offering. I tried it as a Lenten practice and a New Year's resolution, but I failed numerous times. For those who know me, I am not a morning person. Don't talk to me before I take my morning shower, and don't expect a response until after my morning coffee. As a night person, I never struggled remembering to recite a night prayer, but I couldn't develop the habit of a morning prayer.

Last New Year's, I began the practice again, and I have not missed a day since. This time, I printed out a morning offering, and taped it to the outside of my shower door. Then, at the end of the shower, finally in a semi-awake state, I recite the morning offering.

You could do something similar, with the morning offering or another prayer. Download a saint of the day app for your phone, post a prayer on your bathroom mirror, or associate a prayer with the start of your morning commute. That way you'll always be reminded to pray at a particular time of the day.

Below is a standard morning offering, and the one that is posted on my shower door. Print it out and place it somewhere prominent for your New Year's resolution.

"O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen."