

January 11, 2019

Dear Parents,

*“I do not at all understand the mystery of grace—only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it finds us.” Anne Lamott*

As we start the new year with a multitude of resolutions to exercise more, eat less, etc. I hope we can also resolve to be more mindful of God’s grace in our everyday lives. This might seem easier said than done, but it’s really only as difficult as you make it. Resolutions take time to become habits. Resolutions can have a positive or negative connotation. Resolutions can be public or private. Resolutions can be applied to our faith life. Being mindful and attune to God’s presence can be as simple as watching branches sway in the breeze, feeling the warmth of a comfy blanket, hearing a group of kids chattering, or reading a principal’s Friday letter.

*Resolutions take time to become habits.* Just because I want to find God’s grace doesn’t mean I’ll remember to look for it in the heat of the moment. Don’t beat yourself up over it. That’s the beauty of God’s grace—it’s infinite and based on mercy, not merit. If you look back on a situation and learn from it, there’s good progress there. Reflection is a powerful tool in finding daily graces. If you tell yourself you’ll do better next time, you just might. Keep looking for God’s grace. If you miss it, take a deep breath and look again. God is really, really good at providing a continual supply of grace even if we’re only mindful of it on occasion.

*Resolutions can have a positive or negative connotation.* There is simply nothing negative about God’s grace. The only negative we might apply to it is that we don’t deserve it. We don’t deserve a lot of things! Does a lottery winner deserve to win? Does anyone deserve to suffer through cancer? Our reaction to God’s grace can indeed be positive or negative. If we are mindful, thankful, and gracious we are filled with positivity. If we greet the day with a grouchy groan, we are turning away from the graces God has ready for us. Turn toward, not away. We all have our own individual struggles every single day but by the grace of God we can not only survive them, but learn and grow from them.

*Resolutions can be public or private.* My mind immediately goes to the bible story of the Pharisee wailing and lamenting at the front of the synagogue with his outward appearance in disarray. We are reminded to take care with our appearance and to continue our prayer and fasting quietly so that others don’t know. Our God who sees all things will know and that is enough to fill our hearts with joy. Far be it from me to argue with the gospel writers...but...I believe there is indeed a time and a place to publicly share your faith journey, your prayer, your struggle, and your hope. That time is in the presence of your children. I’m not telling you to hobble through the hallways with knee pads on because you’ve been praying so much but I am telling you to talk about your plans to go to church on Sunday or pick a piece of the homily that spoke to you and comment on it in a positive, public manner. Being mindful, looking for grace, taking leaps of faith, all these behaviors take practice and guidance. We will not be perfect nor

should we expect our children to be perfect. Make a resolution to be perfectly imperfect both for and with your family. Privately work on your hopes and fears but publicly show you are doing everything you can do to progress on your faith journey. Running late? At least you're running, go to Mass. Sing the wrong note? At least you're participating, keep singing. Shed a few tears? At least your heart is open, hold on and push forward. You may not do it correctly but our God who knows all things will appreciate the effort and our children who see all things will learn from your example.

May you always be filled with and surrounded by God's grace,

*Mrs. Hayslip*