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2010, here we come

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To be honest, I've never been a big fan of New Year's. Maybe it is because I'm not one for drinking and staying up past ten. Or maybe it is because all of the excitement and apprehension makes me a little nervous. Or maybe it is because I've never understood the idea of making New Year's resolutions (I'm more of the daily resolution type). Or maybe it is because I'm already so exhausted from Christmas that one more party seems unbearable.

Regardless of my anti-New Year's philosophy, when New Year's rolls around every year, I rally. I go to parties with friends. I watch Dick Clark and the ball drop. I kiss my partner at midnight. I drink a glass of cranberry juice and peach schnapps, having the bartender top the same drink off with cranberry juice throughout the night. And I sing the first few words to Auld Lang Syne, before realizing those are the only words I know.

But the next morning, I don't feel any different. Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 hold the same joys and challenges, responsibilities and regrets. And I wonder how it might feel to be someone who puts more stock in New Year's. Would I wake up on Jan. 1 filled with a little hope and promise?

So, this year, I'm looking at New Year's from a new angle. 2009 was great in many ways. President Obama was sworn into office. Same-sex marriage was passed in the District of Columbia. The Vatican came out against criminalizing homosexuality. Thousands of Catholics have rallied around women religious during the investigation. Healthcare reform got off the ground. My partner and I celebrated our first wedding anniversary. We bought a house. We spent time with friends and family. We are employed and healthy. I even added a few new recipes to my somewhat limited cooking repertoire.

2009 was also tough. Unemployment was at an all-time high. The church hierarchy launched an investigation of women religious, while uplifting the priesthood. Same-sex marriage was defeated in Maine, thanks, in part, to the church hierarchy. Healthcare reform has been stripped down to almost-

nothing. The United States is engaged in two wars and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has yet to be repealed. That house we bought was broken into, as was our new car. We had major issues with contractors during renovations. And some of those new recipes I tried out were utter failures.

The rollercoaster that was 2009 has filled me with the New Year's spirit. I am ready for 2010. This is going to be my year, a better year, a more peaceful year. I can feel it.

When I was little, I have to admit, that I was never thrilled that New Year's Day was a holy day of obligation. I mean, four Masses during two weeks of vacation was not ideal through the eyes of a ten-year-old. But my new view on New Year's has me thinking differently. We go to Mass on New Year's Day to celebrate Mary, the Mother of God, the beacon of peace, so that we might pray for peace in our world and in our hearts and lives. It makes sense that as many are resolving to do better, be better and try harder to be good Christians, that we might pray to Mary to be our guide through this time of renewal.



With Mary as my guide, here are a few of my hopes and resolutions for 2010. I

hope that healthcare passes and once it does, we start working on comprehensive immigration reform. I hope the attorney general in my home state of Maryland decides to recognize same-sex marriages from out-of-state. I hope that the United States pulls out of Iraq and Afghanistan and show the world what peace means. I hope that more people will be able to find meaningful employment. I hope that my partner and I celebrate our second wedding anniversary filled with happiness and love. I hope that we remain safe and healthy and employed. I resolve to eat healthier and exercise more often, to make more art and play more music, to be outside more often, to pray more and to take time to appreciate all that I have. And I resolve to add even more recipes to my collection.

Mary, the Mother of God, made the ultimate resolution back in the day. But she did not leave the rest up to fate or providence. Resolutions are challenges. Mary followed through on hers. I am going to try my best to follow through on mine, knowing that some days, it may be hard to get out of my warm bed to go to the gym or easier to pick up Chipotle on my nights to cook. On those days, I'll just have to remember that my conception wasn't as immaculate as Mary's and try harder the next day.

With all of its challenges and promises, I'm ready for 2010. What are your hopes for the New Year?

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