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New Year's resolutions for our church

Kate Childs Graham | Jan. 3, 2011

As 2010 wound down, many news outlets, including this one, reflected on the past year and posted ?top 10? lists. On many, if not most, of these lists, the Catholic church found its place among the top stories. The pope?s visit to the United Kingdom, his statement on condoms and the Irish sex abuse scandal are but a few stories reviewed. Other stories about Catholics also made the grade. For instance, women priests made Time?s Top 10 Religion stories.

In the midst of all this reflecting, I can?t help but wonder if the reflections might lead to resolutions for 2011.

Are there things that we as a church did in 2010 that we?d like to keep doing? Are there things that we might want to change in the coming year? While as individuals we may be resolving to lose weight or quit smoking, is there something we can resolve to do collectively to create a better church and therefore a better world?

So, I asked some folks what their resolutions for the Catholic church would be. I asked Catholics of every stripe, but I admit that the majority of responses I received were from progressive Catholics. I invite every reader to leave your resolution for our church in the comment section.

Without further ado, here are some of the resolutions I received:

- That dialogue on all fronts will ensue and that LGBT individuals will be treated as legitimate human beings - made in the image of God.
- Open the dialogue on reproductive rights and acknowledge the reality of women's call to the priesthood.
- Respect religious orders and listen to the Holy Spirit.
- To get a better press office at the Vatican.
- Get real about birth control and open the gates for women to the priesthood and married clergy.
- To get back to the true spirit of the Gospels.
- To be authentic.
- To have equal representation of people of color in the leadership of our church.
- To be more open minded and transparent.
- To end bullying of any kind from the pulpits.
- To foster inclusiveness, openness, acceptance. That if we are the Church, we have a say.
- To stop attempting to explain away the sexual abuse/rape of children by clergy and the cover-ups by the bishops, and instead talk with survivors and counselors about what they need.

A recent study was done of 3,000 people who made New Year?s resolutions. Fifty-two percent of the participants were confident of success at the start of the year. A year later, only 12 percent had followed through on their resolution. Let?s hope for the sake of our church and world that our return rate might be a little higher if we resolve to create change together.

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serves on the Women?s Ordination Conference board of directors and the Call to Action Next Generation Leadership Team.]

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