Columns
Spirituality



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I have traveled less than usual during the pandemic, and wearing a watch on my wrist is no longer necessary. However, accessories are part of big celebrations. On the eve of the new year, a sudden inspiration turned out to be a beautiful reflection as I gazed at my watch! Every passing second — tick-tock, tick-tock — of the watch on my wrist reminded me of the date, day and month.

The New Year's day and date welcomed us into the much-awaited year 2022, which was ushered in with a colorful display of fireworks that brought sparks and brightened up the sky. It was humans who made the noise, but the numbers changed silently without any hustle or bustle, as gently as any other day. Just as the King of the World — the Babe of Bethlehem — came in silence without doing any harm to creation.

The world welcomed 2022 in different time zones, with lots of hope, dreams and wishes — and here with mists and snow all around. It's foggy and the air and land routes have low visibility, making it difficult for vehicles to travel on road and by air.

God in his graciousness has gifted us another year in all benevolence and mercy. He smiled upon us as we chose our new clothing, formal and informal. The Lord patiently stood beside us as we chose our shoes and other accessories, for — keeping in mind the plans he has for us, plans for our welfare — God's kindness engulfed us (Jeremiah 29:11).

Welfare means goodness, benefits, blessing. God is 100% sure of the welfare and bonuses he has in store for us. We are just like employees awaiting a festival bonus from their companies. And whoever has any doubts can refer to what the word says in Proverbs 10:22: "It is the Lord's blessing that brings wealth, and no effort can substitute for it." With this assured hope that God gives us, in response I need to believe and have faith in his promises.

Promises are made and promises are fulfilled. When we were children, our world was full of promises made by our parents, friends and relatives. And our mothers showered lots of love on us, and used tactics like promises to discipline and guide us. Sometimes my mother canceled promises when I faltered and deviated from her intent in making the promise.

Most of the treasured moments of childhood are related to our mother-and-child relationships. God designed our life of worship and service and there was love and

sacrifice around the Mother and Child, Mary and Jesus. For it was Mary who brought Jesus into the world and became the Mother of God, whose feast we celebrated on the first day of the first month, the first feast of the first month.

On that first day of the first month, we needed to make promises to our good selves: One might call them resolutions, but I prefer the word "promise" because it has more weight and age than the word "resolution."

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Truly, I promise that I will take care of my health — spiritual, mental, moral, emotional and physical: the first promise for my good self. This promise involves sacrifice, challenges and denial of wants.

A second necessary good promise is to maintain healthy relations/relationship with God, others and self — which demands humility, forgiveness, prayer and ardent charity.

The third promise to self is to make right choices or to choose in accord with the right conscience — one that prepares me to suffer for being truthful — to the extent even of being left alone or rejected.

An actual example would help us understand those three promises. In a family of four siblings (two brothers and two sisters), the younger brother relinquished his right of ownership and moved away when he bought a plot and built his own house. After some years, the elder brother asked the younger brother to sign an affidavit that said the property belonged only to the two brothers. Even knowing that there were not two, but four siblings, the brother and his wife signed the papers.

When the sisters learned about this crime, they reproached their brothers and parted ways, distancing themselves, even from special occasions and family celebrations.

That was not the end of the property issue. When the time came for transfer of the property, the younger brother had to give his signature for clearance, and refused to do so. Now, the younger brother's family was at peace, enjoyed good health, the broken ties with the sisters and their children were restored, and the guilty feeling had vanished. However, the elder brother parted ways from the younger, for not

agreeing to be part of a fraud.

To choose in accord with right conscience helps us to "live and let live" come what may — a silent manifestation of great love and service, to God, others and my good self (including creation, which is part of love and service to humanity). Our goodness should flow like the waters of a river that silently carries along with it all the dirt and grime.

That's the beauty of the elements of the earth: They complete their mission without being biased, silently fulfilling their purpose. A great thought for reflection.

Gifting oneself with such priceless promises at the beginning of the year could indeed pave the way for holiness. It is important to know consciously what I will do and what I will not do, because the word of God tells us lot about the positive and negative effect of things done willfully.

Judas Iscariot pre-planned the betrayal of Jesus and implemented it (Matthew 26:14-16). The woman with hemorrhages thought if only she could touch the fringes of Jesus' cloak, she would be healed, and she received the blessing of healing (Luke 8:43-48). In a life of uncertainty amid COVID-19 and its omicron variant, an unpredictable journey awaits us. So a conscious decision is a must!

We don't know the future, but we know who holds the future, for it is well-expressed in Jeremiah 29:11. The Lord also assures us that he makes all things new, that he will complete what he has begun; that he will provide for us even on parched land and make a way in the wilderness. He says no weapon that is fashioned against us shall prosper — be it COVID-19 or the omicron variant, nothing will harm us, if we remain in him.

Therefore, entering into 2022 is choosing to live a healthy life with a true promise to my good self: to live and let others live graciously.