



**A Happy and Blessed New Year – the time when we resolve to make changes so that things will not be as they were before.**

Time is too precious a gift, too scarce a commodity to be squandered. If we waste it, we lose more opportunities than we know. Each moment is an opportunity for prayer, for kindness, for self-control, for personal growth. “Make the best possible use of your time,” says St. Paul (Colossians 4:5).

If time is charged with opportunity and not simply a succession of empty moments, it is shameful to waste it and sinful to kill it. The Holy Scriptures place the accent upon time as a God-given opportunity for us to use, to repent, to turn to Jesus, to love God and neighbor, to grow more and more unto his likeness.

How we spend time is far more important than how we spend money. Money mistakes can be corrected, but when time is gone, it is gone forever.

When Charles M. Schwab was a president of Bethlehem Steel he said to Ivy Lee, a management consultant: “Show me a way to get more things done. If it works, I will pay anything within reason.”

Lee handed Schwab a piece of paper, “Write down the things you have to do tomorrow,” he said. Schwab did it. “Now number these items in the order of their real importance,” Lee said. Schwab complied. “The first thing tomorrow morning,” Lee added, “start working on number one,” and stay with it until it is completed. Next take number two and don’t go any further until it is completed. Then proceed to number three and so on. If you can’t complete anything on schedule, don’t agonize. You will have taken care of the most important things before being distracted by less important items.

“The secret is to do this daily,” continued Lee. “Evaluate the relative importance of things you have to get done...establish priorities...record your plan action...and stick to it. Do this every working day.” In a few weeks Charles Schwab sent Ivy Lee a check for \$25,000. Schwab said that this lesson was the most profitable one he had learned in his business career.

What a difference it would make in our lives as disciples of Jesus if we established daily such a priority of things to be done in the order of their real importance based on the prayer: “Lord, what are the things you really want me to do today for You, for my family, for others, for myself?”

It is this kind of priority system that Jesus urges us to establish for the New Year. It’s a little story but it packs a big meaning that should make for a Happy New Year.

“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

Happy New Year!

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District Chaplain

Resources: Daily Vitamins for Spiritual Growth. Day by Day with Jesus through the Church Year by Anthony M. Coniaris. Light and Life Publishing Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1994.

**Charles M. Schwab** (February 18, 1862 – September 18, 1939) was an American steel entrepreneur. Under his leadership, Bethlehem Steel became the second largest steel maker in the United States, and one of the most important heavy manufacturers in the world.