

January 9, 2023

We missed you at CRE on Monday! In order for you to keep up with what was missed, please read through the material below and complete any of the activities/answer the questions below. Your responses can be emailed to rotramel@stjohn23rd.org or given to your catechist/small group leader at our next class.

On Monday, we looked at the New Year and New Year's resolutions.

Hopes for the New Year: Have you made a New Year's resolution? If yes, what was it? What are some common New Year's resolutions?

As Christians, our New Year actually started on the First Sunday of Advent. However, a new calendar year is a good time to look back on what happened in the last year as well as look forward to the new year with hopes, dreams, goals and intention.

Let's begin by looking back at everything that happened in 2022 as a society. Make a list of all the major events you can think of that happened in 2022 in the world, country and locally.

Now I invite you to look back on what happened in your own life... write down some of what happened to you personally.

Looking at both lists, where do we find hope?

Let's look ahead now...what are some hopes you have for 2023? Write them down on the paper.

Dreams for the New Year: Let's turn to dreams...what is the importance of dreams? Are dreams important? Why or why not? What is the difference between a hope and a dream? Please answer before reading on!

We might say that **Hopes** are a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen while **Dreams** are a desired aspiration, ambition or ideal.

Hope implies a brighter future, that tomorrow will be better than today or yesterday. Hope also inspires people to invest in their own development, and to commit to continuous and never-ending improvement. Even and especially during a crisis, Hope can be a powerful motivator to overcome adversity and create new momentum toward a more desirable outcome.

Dreams feel more difficult to define, as these are very personal to each individual. In more practical terms, our 'bucket list' articulates what we would like to have, be, do or give back, usually with no prescribed deadline other than 'this lifetime'. Dreams may also include our

'wish list' for others in our lives, those closest to us, and even for our communities, countries and the planet as a whole.

Dreams may be limitless, with no boundaries other than the imagination. Dreams are unlikely to become a reality, unless we take focused and persistent action to make them come true!

What are some dreams people commonly have?

I invite you now to reflect on some dreams you have...but let's think more about your dreams for 2023 for yourself, and the world.

Goals & Intentions: So how do we attain our hopes and dreams? Which brings us to Goals – perhaps better defined as 'Dreams with a Deadline!' Goals are tangible, achievement-oriented events or outcomes, with a specific deadline identified to accomplish the goal. SMART goal acronyms have been around for ages (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) and can be very helpful, but here are some other questions that are equally powerful:

- Specifically, what's your dream?
- How will the future be different and/or better than the present?
- By when would you like that dream to come true?
- Why do you want that dream to come true?

I invite you now to think about some goals...and be specific! Try to make them time bound by the year 2023...maybe it's a goal to improve your grades or your relationship with your parents – or God!

Intentions turn Goals into Action – or short-circuit the goal-setting process by simply creating the energy and actions needed to make an outcome become a reality.

Goals are the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result while **Intentions** are an aim or plan; determined to do something

What are some specific intentions you have to reach your goals?

Let's take this example: I hope to start on the varsity basketball team; my dream is to make the winning basket in the championship; my goal is to improve my 3-point shot so that I make 50% of the shots; I intend to practice three-point shots for half hour every day.

Bringing it to Prayer: But we are going to throw one more thing in here – where is God in all this? What role does your relationship with God have on your hopes, dreams, goals and intentions?

Think about what Jesus teaches us – to love one another, to treat others as we want to be treated, to care for the poor and the outcast...how does that factor into your hopes and

dreams? In all we do, what helps us focus is by bringing it to God in prayer. To frame our prayer, we are going to use a modified Examen based on a prayer developed by St. Ignatius.

I invite you now to put down your notes and get into a comfortable position. Let your muscles relax and your mind to quiet down. Take a deep breath.

Ask God to make His presence known around and within you. Place your hands, palms up, in a gesture of receptivity.

Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big or small, that you received in the last year.

Ask God to reveal to you your spiritual state of being at this present moment. What are your strongest thoughts and feelings at this very moment?

Turn over these thoughts and feelings to God and ask God to make them holy. At this very moment, are you spiritually free or unfree? Give thanks or ask for healing.

Now look to the future. What attitudes and feelings are you likely to have tomorrow? Will it be a challenge to live in God's freedom tomorrow? If so, who and why will it be challenging? What might be the most challenging moment? What grace or virtue (strength, fortitude, patience, fidelity) might I need from God to live in his freedom? I ask God for that grace.

Now perhaps the most important question: What would tomorrow be like if you were spiritually free all day long?

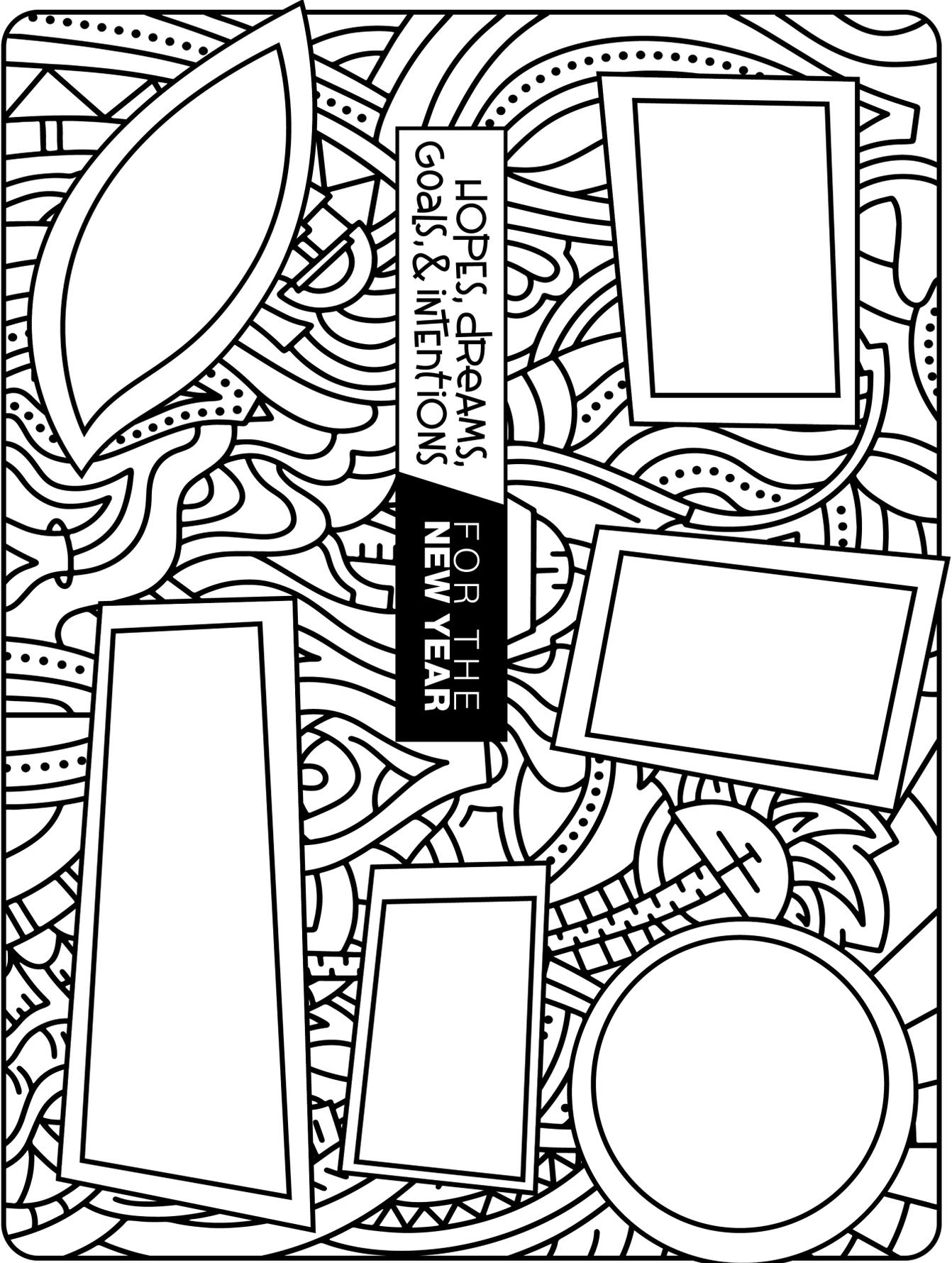
Allow yourself to daydream such a wonderful day. Allow yourself to experience great desires as you imagine moving through the day tomorrow and the rest of the year. Ask God to show you the way to walk through these sorts of days.

If you feel called to do so, make a resolution to be the kind of person you feel called to be. Resolve, to the best of your ability, to live in freedom – in a realistic and particular way.

Resolve to adopt one perspective over another, to say these words instead of those, to do this thing rather than the other thing.

Place your hands together as a sign of closure and bow your head.

Complete the coloring sheets. Color the sheet below and think in a specific way about what their hopes, dreams, goals and intentions are for 2023 and turn in your completed coloring sheet.



HOPES, DREAMS,
GOALS, & INTENTIONS

FOR THE
NEW YEAR