

New Year Successes and Failed Attempts

I have mentioned my struggles in the past with my autoimmune disorder, which left me with foot drop. I thought I had it under control—spoken like a true Martha—but the foot drop, though mild, stirred up bursitis. I returned to physical therapy, and although I felt as though I was sliding backward in my health, I had to accept that this is going to be part of who I am.

I spent more than a few months getting the bursitis worked out. The therapy sessions were supposed to be about my health, but they eventually moved on to learning about sourdough, a passion shared by my physical therapists. Through those conversations, I discovered the benefits of sourdough bread. Please don't think I was an instant success with my starter—the amount of sourdough I created and killed could warrant a whole new season of *Dateline*.



Tonight, however, I see a glimmer of life in the sourdough, and I am praying it survives long enough to become a loaf. My New Year's attempt to eat healthier may actually come to fruition.

If I look at this sourdough and my spiritual health, it would be easy to grow discouraged. Growth isn't instant, and it doesn't always look the way I expect it to. I have another New Year's resolution—to read one book a month—and I find myself approaching it with the same determination I bring to the sourdough.

Both require patience and attention. I have to tend the sourdough, watching for signs of life, making small adjustments, and trusting the process. My spiritual life asks the same of me—to slow down, to show up consistently, and to allow growth to happen in its own time.

Reading a book a month will stretch my focus, but I am surrounded by spiritual wisdom waiting to be opened. The resources are already there; now I simply need to be faithful in tending what I have been given.

With grace and perseverance, I can do this.

I've asked for help from sourdough experts, and I can't be afraid to ask for help in my spiritual life either. Confession is a great way to stir up the yeast of the soul. I have a favorite priest I reach out to with frustrations or questions, and I leave the confessional stirred up and ready to grow again.

My niece is my newest support for sourdough, with Mary Hall on quick dial. They are also part of my spiritual support system, along with all my sisters in Christ with the LDCCW. A quick phone call can help my spiritual life begin to grow again.

This year, focus on what you need in order to grow as a Catholic woman. Tend your faith carefully. Stay rooted in Christ, for “those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit” (John 15:5). Allow your faith to begin bubbling over—just like sourdough—and begin the year with a healthier spiritual and physical start.

Cheers to 2026!

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