

Morning Rundown: How to 'Number Your Days' as You Enter a New Year

Here's a quick rundown of the top stories on :

How to 'Number Your Days' as You Enter a New Year

At the end of every year, I set aside time to reflect and evaluate. I look at photos from the past year, savor the good memories, grieve for the sad moments and celebrate the victories. I also carefully consider any mistakes I made and how I can grow spiritually in the coming year.

I see this principle of self-evaluation in Psalm 119:59: "I consider my ways, and I turn my feet to Your testimonies." Lamentations 3:40 adds: "Let us search and try our ways, and return to the Lord!" And the apostle Paul told the Corinthians: "Examine yourselves, seeing whether you are in the faith; test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5a).

We usually avoid looking inward because it can be painful. British pastor Charles Spurgeon told his congregation in the 1800s: "Most people have seen themselves in a looking-glass, but there is another looking-glass, which gives true reflections, into which few men look. To study oneself in the light of God's Word, and carefully go over one's condition ... would be a very healthy exercise."

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Worldwide Terror: Over 160 Christians Slaughtered During Christmas Celebrations

In a horrific turn of events, Nigerian Christians were targeted by terrorists during their Christmas celebrations, resulting in the deaths of over 160 innocent people. The coordinated attacks, which took place on Saturday night (Dec. 23) through Monday (Dec. 25), targeted predominantly Christian areas in Plateau state, Nigeria.

The assailants, believed to be a mix of criminal elements including ethnic Fulani herders and mercenaries from Chad or Niger, carried out the attacks in several villages such as NTV, Maiyanga, Ruku, Hurum, Darwat and Dares. The victims, mostly women, children and the elderly, were preparing for Christmas programs when the terrorists struck.

Local officials confirmed the attacks and stated that at least 160 people were slain. The attacks were described as “well-coordinated” and “unacceptable” by Plateau Gov. Caleb Mutfwang. The governor vowed to strengthen security agencies to tackle the insecurity in the state.

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Church Faces International Backlash Over Heretical Nativity Scene

A church in Italy has recently come under fire for its “dangerous” and “blasphemous” nativity scene featuring a second woman—in place of Joseph—alongside the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. The Church of Saints Peter and Paul, located in Capocastello di Mercogliano, is now facing criticism for its “inclusive” nativity scene, as reported by Reuters.

The Rev. Vitaliano Della Sala, the priest behind the idea, stated, “I wanted to show that families are no longer just the traditional ones.” He further explained that the display aimed to represent “children of separated and divorced people, gay couples, single people and young mothers” present in their parishes.

In response to the controversy, Della Sala referred to Pope Francis' recent decision to allow priests to bless same-sex couples. The nativity scene, which included one of the Mary figures draped in rainbow colors, sparked an online petition for its removal.

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