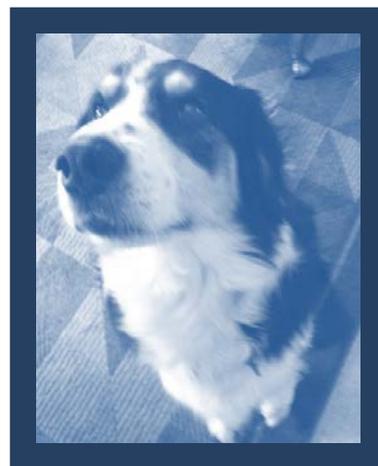


CLANCY'S CLICHES

Oooohh... Look at that column next to mine! The picture of those “treats” is making me drool! Oops... Oh, hello there! Here’s my column for the first of the year and all I can say is—*Finally!* A normal picture of me. I’ve been subjected to a myriad of head ornaments or as the fashion industry calls them, headband filaments.



Here’s confirmation of what I’ve always mentioned in my column: Naps are good for you! So my first Resolution this year is to nap more, especially during these really long days of winter! The studies are in: napping has value according to the experts. (See, I’m an expert on this, too!) Those who nap generally enjoy better mental health, better mental efficiency, and lower blood pressure than people who do not. Unfortunately, finding opportunities to rest in our society is not so easy - we’re bombarded with stimulation everywhere—especially in my normal napping places! Many cultures and animals worldwide embrace the habit of napping—so join ’em! Here are some hints to try!

1. **Accept napping as a positive thing.** Remind yourself frequently that napping can make a day more productive - it is actually the opposite of being lazy. (toldja so, nyeh nyeh)
2. **Do not fight the body's desire to nap.** This will result in unpleasant or unproductive naps. (no fighting it)
3. **Take naps when you can.** If your schedule doesn’t permit a nap every day, consider taking quick naps as a passenger in cars, trains and airplanes, or like many already do—during Fr. Jim’s homilies. (Ooops did I say that? You really should listen—his homilies are very inspiring.)
4. **Consider time and duration.** Napping for too long or too often can be counterproductive. For me there’s never a wrong time or frequency!
5. **Napping can mean just taking a break.** Lying on a sofa or just staring into space is the essence of rest - it is *not doing* that refreshes you in body and mind.

Here are some more of my New Year’s Resolutions:

- *I will not bark each time I see or hear a dog on TV.
- *I will not steal socks belonging to my master and then dance all over the back yard with them.
- *I will not chew red crayons, pens, or markers because my master will think that I am hemorrhaging.
- *I will not roll my toys or dribble treats or food under the desk. My master *is* in his new “zero” decade and it’s hard for him to get under there—hint: think Golden Buckeye!
- *I must shake the rainwater out of my coat *before* I enter the rectory-except if it’s right next to the plants.
- *I will not chase the stick until I see it leave my master’s hand. (I’m onto him, now!)

Some more thoughts for Gnu Year and winter...

...according to Iris Murdoch, “One of the secrets to a happy life is continuous small *treats*.”
(Ah-hem, I think that includes literally as well as figuratively.)

...what did the big furry hat say to the warm wooly scarf? **You hang around, while I go on a-head!**

...how can you avoid cold paws this winter? **Don't go around BRRRfooted!**

...what do you call a litter of little dogs who’ve just come in from the snow? **Slush Puppies!**

...snowflakes are one of nature’s most fragile things,
but just look what they can do when they stick together!

...and finally, remember that in this Gnu Year, try to take one look ahead
—it’s better than two looks behind!

Howlin’ is hootin’; Growlin’s not gooten! -Clancy

