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December Recollection Kit (2023)

A recollection is a “mini-retreat,” a few hours of quiet prayer when we look at our lives in God's presence. This guide can help us spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where we are.

12/01/2023

A monthly recollection is a chance to step back from the whirlwind of

daily tasks for a few hours of quiet prayer spent looking at God, the world, and ourselves. It is not always easy to find time to pray, but it is always worthwhile.

The best way to enjoy this recollection is to find a time that you can commit to spending with our Lord, and a calm place—free of distractions—where you can pray. Set aside other tasks, switch your phone to “do not disturb,” and grab a notebook. It is a good idea to make note of resolutions and ideas throughout the recollection, but the most important thing is to put yourself in front of our Lord, to look at Him and to let Him look at you.

I. Introduction

II. Meditation: Mary is Spotless and All Beautiful (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: How to Prepare the Way for the Lord (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Very often we hear it said that the Lord is present on our journey, that he accompanies us and speaks to us. But perhaps, distracted as we are by many things, this truth remains merely theoretical for us. Yes, we know that the Lord is coming but we do not live according to this truth, or we imagine that the Lord will come in a spectacular way, perhaps through some miraculous sign. And instead, Jesus says that it will take place as in 'the days of Noah' (cf. v. 37). And what did they do in the days

of Noah? Just the normal, everyday things of life, as always: 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage' (v. 38). Let us bear this in mind: God is hidden in our life, he is always there — he is concealed in the most common and most ordinary situations in our life. He does not come in extraordinary events, but in everyday things. He manifests himself in everyday things. He is there, in our daily work, in a chance encounter, in the face of someone in need, even when we face days that seem grey and monotonous. It is right there that we find the Lord, who calls to us, speaks to us and inspires our actions [...].

"Brothers and sisters, in this Season of Advent, let us be shaken out of our torpor and let us awaken from our slumber! Let us try to ask ourselves: am I aware of what I am living, am I alert, am I awake? Do I try to recognize God's presence in daily

situations, or am I distracted and a little overwhelmed by things? If we are unaware of his coming today, we will also be unprepared when he arrives at the end of time. Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us remain vigilant! Waiting for the Lord to come, waiting for the Lord to draw near to us, because he is there, but waiting alert. And may the Holy Virgin, Woman of waiting, who knew how to perceive the passing of God in the humble and hidden life of Nazareth and welcomed him in her womb, help us in this journey of being attentive to wait for the Lord who is among us and passes by" (Pope Francis, Angelus, 27-XI-2022).

II. MEDITATION

The Preface for the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception begins with

these words: "For you preserved the most Blessed Virgin Mary from all stain of original sin, so that in her, endowed with the rich fullness of your grace, you might prepare a worthy Mother for your Son and signify the beginning of the Church, his beautiful Bride without spot or wrinkle." Listen to this meditation on the mystery of our Mother's Immaculate Conception [here](#):

The most important part of the meditation is your personal conversation with our Lord. You can use the priest's prayer to inspire your own.

This meditation is part of the podcast "In Your Presence." You can subscribe to it on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Breaker](#), [Castbox](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Overcast](#), [Pocket Casts](#), [RadioPublic](#), or [Spotify](#).

III. SPIRITUAL READING

“You write,” says St. Josemaria in *The Way*, no. 117: “In my spiritual reading I build up a store of fuel. It looks like a lifeless heap, but I often find that my memory, of its own accord, will draw from it material which fills my prayer with life and inflames my thanksgiving after Communion.”

We suggest spending 10-15 minutes reading St. Josemaria's homily on Advent, "The Christian Vocation." Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the account of the birth of Jesus in St. Luke's Gospel.

IV. HOLY ROSARY

The Holy Rosary is an ancient Christian prayer to the Blessed Virgin

Mary, our Mother, asking her to pray for all her children in our time of need. You can find a description of how to pray the Rosary [here](#), and download the Litany of Loreto (traditionally prayed at the end of the Rosary) [here](#).

V. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The questions below can help us consider in the presence of God how we've responded to His love in our acts and omissions. It may help to begin by invoking the Holy Spirit and to end with an act of contrition, expressing our sorrow for our sins and imploring God's grace to return and remain close to Him. The act of contrition can be any we like, including one as simple as Peter's words to Jesus after the Resurrection:

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you" (Jn 21:17).

1. "Advent is here. What a marvelous time in which to renew your desire, your nostalgia, your real longing for Christ to come — for him to come every day to your soul in the Eucharist. The Church encourages us: *Ecce veniet!* — He is about to arrive!" (*The Forge*, 548) How am I taking advantage of these days to renew my hope and seek a closer encounter with God, especially in the Eucharist?

2. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; they dwelt in a land and shadows of death, and a light shone on them" (Is 9:1).* What aspects of my life could be filled more with God's light in this time of preparation for the Lord's coming?

3. Referring to Jesus, John the Baptist said: *"He must increase, and I must*

decrease" (Jn 3:30). Do I also desire to let the Lord grow in me, in my life?

4. *"The Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"* (Lk 1:35). How do I seek the light of the Holy Spirit in complex situations? How can I imitate Mary's availability?

5. *"I come to bring you good news of great joy: today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord"* (Lk 2:10). Does the arrival of a new Christmas fill me with hope, as it did the shepherds?

6. *"When a gentle silence enveloped everything and the night had reached the middle of its course, your almighty word burst forth from heaven"* (Wis 18:14-15). Amid so much exterior noise, how can I find and protect the interior quiet that allows me to be with Mary, my Mother, and the Child Jesus?

7. "He has become so small — you see: a Child — so that you can approach him with confidence" (*The Way*, 94). Do I try to live Christmas with my family, simply, by adoring the Child together, singing Christmas carols, preparing the Nativity scene, carrying out works of mercy with other families, etc.?

VI. MEDITATION

Advent is a time of waiting. Listen to this meditation on making ourselves ready to accept God's action in our lives here:

The most important part of the meditation is your personal conversation with our Lord. You can use the priest's prayer to inspire your own.

This meditation is part of the podcast "In Your Presence." You can subscribe to it on Apple Podcasts, Breaker, Castbox, Google Podcasts, Overcast, Pocket Casts, RadioPublic, or Spotify.

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