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May Recollection Kit (2021)

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

05/14/2021

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: Our Lady of Africa (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: The Great Unknown (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

This month, we turn to our Blessed Mother Mary with particular affection. In May 1935, remembering his pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Sonsoles, in Avila, St. Josemaria wrote, "I wanted to celebrate Mass at the DYA before setting out toward Avila. During this Mass, in the Memento of the Living, with a determination that was particularly strong (more than just my own), I asked our Lord Jesus to increase in us—in the Work—our love for Mary, and I asked that this love might be expressed in deeds"

(The Founder of Opus Dei I, Andrés Vázquez de Prada).

II. MEDITATION

Mary, Jesus' Mother and ours, protects all her children. This meditation can help us get to know her through one of her many evocative titles: Our Lady of Africa. You can listen to this meditation [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.

III. SPIRITUAL READING

“You write,” says St. Josemaria in *The Way*, pt. 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 "To Jesus Through Mary," a homily by St. Josemaria in *Christ is Passing By*.

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. *"Mary arose and went in haste to the mountain"* (Lk 1:39). Our Lady went to visit her cousin Elizabeth immediately, without hesitating,

even though she was pregnant. Do I also try to anticipate people's needs, looking for ways to help at home and to serve others? Am I flexible enough to change my plans when people or circumstances require it?

2. Our Lady is the Mother of Fair Love. Do I nourish my love for my spouse with small acts of affection, tenderness, attention, listening, and care for my own appearance? Do I try to make life pleasant for him/her?

3. Do I put my children under our Lady's protection, asking with Christian faith for them and for others to discover the attractiveness of a life close to Jesus Christ? Would I be happy for them to give themselves entirely to Him, according to their personal vocations?

4. *"It is not enough to know that she is Mother, to consider her in this way, to speak of her in this way. She is your Mother and you are her child; she*

loves you as if you were her only child in this world" (*Friends of God*, n. 293). Do I treat Mary with the confident trust of a little child in need of affection and security?

5. *"Come, O Holy Spirit: enlighten my understanding, that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the insidiousness of the enemy; inflame my will..."* (Prayer composed by St. Josemaría, 1932). Do I rely on the Holy Spirit's help to discover how to be more Christ-like? How do His inspirations help me to improve my character and take care of others more and more?

6. *"You have taken me by the right hand, for I am always with you; you will guide me with your counsel, and lead me to glory"* (Ps 73:23-24). Do I allow myself to be accompanied and helped in spiritual direction? When I meditate on the advice I receive, do I

try to understand what the Lord wants from me?

7. *"The wind blows where it wills,"* Jesus tells Nicodemus (Jn 3:8). Do I try to learn, like Nicodemus, that God can speak to me however He wants, including through other people and through the events of each day?

VI. MEDITATION

We can prepare for the feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, by reflecting on the way God comes into our souls. You can pray listening to St. Josemaria's homily, "The Great Unknown," [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.

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