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March 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.

03/03/2023

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: The Real Meaning of Lent (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: Mortification: Finding Joy in the Cross (30 minutes)

I. INTRODUCTION

"Lent precedes and prepares for Easter. It is a time to hear the Word of God, to convert, to prepare for and remember Baptism, to be reconciled with God and one's neighbour, and of more frequent recourse to the 'arms of Christian penance:' prayer, fasting and good works (cf. *Mt* 6:1-6 and 16-18).

"In the Roman Rite, the beginning of the forty days of penance is marked with the austere symbol of ashes which are used in the Liturgy of Ash Wednesday. The use of ashes is a survival from an ancient rite

according to which converted sinners submitted themselves to canonical penance. The act of putting on ashes symbolizes fragility and mortality, and the need to be redeemed by the mercy of God. Far from being a merely external act, the Church has retained the use of ashes to symbolize that attitude of internal penance to which all the baptized are called during Lent. The faithful who come to receive ashes should be assisted in perceiving the implicit internal significance of this act, which disposes them towards conversion and renewed Easter commitment.

"Notwithstanding the secularisation of contemporary society, the Christian faithful, during Lent, are clearly conscious of the need to turn the mind towards those realities which really count, which require Gospel commitment and integrity of life which, through self-denial of

those things which are superfluous, are translated into good works and solidarity with the poor and needy.

"Those of the faithful who infrequently attend the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist should be aware of the long ecclesial tradition associating the precept of confessing grave sins and receive Holy Communion at least once during the Lenten season, or preferably during Eastertide" (*Dicastery for Divine Worship, Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 124-125).

II. MEDITATION

We are entering Lent, a time of self-denial and penance. It can be easy to see this period largely as a time of greater discipline, of sacrifice, of making myself the best version of

myself that I can possibly be. But let us remember what Lent is really about: looking to Christ crucified, Christ on the Cross, so we come to understand better the love Christ has shown for us. 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.

This meditation is part of the podcast "Meditations in Manhattan." You can subscribe to it on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Pocket Casts](#), [Stitcher](#), [Podcast Addict](#), or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

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 "Humility" in *Friends of God*.

Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, St. Matthew's account of the temptations in the desert.

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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. Our Lord gives us the gift of Lent each year, a time of prayer and penance to prepare for Easter. Where in my life is the Lord waiting for my heart to turn to him?

2. *Pray then like this: Our Father...* (Mt 6:9). Do I enjoy my moments of dialogue with God, telling him what has happened to me, how I feel, what my hopes and dreams are, what my loved ones need, etc.? Do I really believe that God is my Father?

3. *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you* (Mt 6:6). In my prayer, do I try to speak from the depths of my heart to address our Lord? How do I foster recollection in order to dialogue peacefully with Jesus?

4. *Unless a grain of wheat dies when it falls to the ground, it remains unfruitful; but if it dies, it bears much*

fruit (Jn 12:24). "A spirit of penance is to be found first of all in taking advantage of the many trifling occasions — deeds, renunciations, sacrifices, services rendered... — which we find daily along our way and we then convert into acts of love and contrition, into mortifications. In this way we shall be able to gather a bouquet at the end of each day — a fine bunch of flowers which we can offer to God!" (*The Forge*, 408)

5. "Christian life is a continuous beginning again each day. It renews itself over and over. Christ gives us his risen life, he rises in us, if we become sharers in his cross and his death" (*Christ is Passing By*, 114). How can I accompany our Lord during this Lent? Do I live fasting and abstinence knowing that they are an invitation to remember that the food that satisfies man's hunger and thirst is not material, but God himself?

6. *While he was yet far away, his father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran to meet him, embraced him and kissed him (Lk 15:20). God is continually waiting for us. Do I seek to turn with hope to the Lord's mercy, knowing that confession "fills us with joy and strength" (Friends of God, 214)?*

VI. MEDITATION

Jesus has address this call to each one of us: "Unless you take up your cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple." Let us respond to this call, giving thanks to God. There we will discover joy. 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.

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