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May 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.

05/09/2023

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: Finding God in Times of Silence (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"At times, we may simply feel weary about our daily routine, tired of taking risks in a cold, hard world where only the clever and the strong seem to get ahead. At other times, we may feel helpless and discouraged before the power of evil, the conflicts that tear relationships apart, the attitudes of calculation and indifference that seem to prevail in society, the cancer of corruption – there is a great deal of it, the spread of injustice, the icy winds of war. Then too, we may have come face to face with death, because it robbed us of the presence of our loved ones or

because we brushed up against it in illness or a serious setback. Then it is easy to yield to disillusionment, once the wellspring of hope has dried up. In these or similar situations – each of us knows our own plights, our paths come to a halt before a row of tombs, and we stand there, filled with sorrow and regret, alone and powerless, repeating the question, “Why?” That chain of “why.”

"The women at Easter, however, do not stand frozen before the tomb; rather, the Gospel tells us, “they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples”. They bring the news that will change life and history forever: Christ is risen! At the same time, they remember to convey the Lord’s summons to the disciples to go to Galilee, for there they will see him. Let us ask ourselves today, brothers and sisters: what does it mean to go to Galilee? Two things: on the one

hand, to leave the enclosure of the Upper Room and go to the land of the Gentiles (cf. Mt 4:15), to come forth from hiding and to open themselves up to mission, to leave fear behind and to set out for the future. On the other hand, and this is very beautiful, to return to the origins, for it was precisely in Galilee that everything began. There the Lord had met and first called the disciples...

"This, then, is what the Pasch of the Lord accomplishes: it motivates us to move forward, to leave behind our sense of defeat, to roll away the stone of the tombs in which we often imprison our hope, and to look with confidence to the future, for Christ is risen and has changed the direction of history. Yet, to do this, the Pasch of the Lord takes us back to the grace of our own past; it brings us back to Galilee, where our love story with Jesus began, where the first call took

place. In other words, it asks us to relive that moment, that situation, that experience in which we met the Lord, experienced his love and received a radiantly new way of seeing ourselves, the world around us and the mystery of life itself. Brothers and sisters, to rise again, to start anew, to take up the journey, we always need to return to Galilee, that is, to go back, not to an abstract or ideal Jesus, but to the living, concrete and palpable memory of our first encounter with him. Yes, to go forward we need to go back, to remember; to have hope, we need to revive our memory. This is what we are asked to do: to remember and go forward! If you recover that first love, the wonder and joy of your encounter with God, you will keep advancing. So remember, and keep moving forward.

"Remember your own Galilee and walk towards it, for it is the "place"

where you came to know Jesus personally, where he stopped being just another personage from a distant past, but a living person: not some distant God but the God who is at your side, who more than anyone else knows you and loves you.

Brother, sister, remember Galilee, your Galilee, and your call.

Remember the Word of God who at a precise moment spoke directly to you. Remember that powerful experience of the Spirit; that great joy of forgiveness experienced after that one confession; that intense and unforgettable moment of prayer; that light that was kindled within you and changed your life; that encounter, that pilgrimage... Each of us knows where our Galilee is located. Each of us knows the place of his or her interior resurrection, that beginning and foundation, the place where things changed. We cannot leave this in the past; the Risen Lord invites us to return there to celebrate Easter.

Remember your Galilee. Remind yourself. Today, relive that memory. Return to that first encounter. Think back on what it was like, reconstruct the context, time and place.

Remember the emotions and sensations; see the colours and savour the taste of it. For it is when you forgot that first love, when you failed to remember that first encounter, that the dust began to settle on your heart. That is when you experienced sorrow and, like the disciples, you saw the future as empty, like a tomb with a stone sealing off all hope. Yet today, brother, sister, the power of Easter summons you to roll away every stone of disappointment and mistrust. The Lord is an expert in rolling back the stones of sin and fear. He wants to illuminate your sacred memory, your most beautiful memory, and to make you relive that first encounter with him. Remember and keep moving forward. Return to

him and rediscover the grace of God's resurrection within you! Return to Galilee. Return to your Galilee" (Pope Francis, Easter Vigil homily, 8-IV-2023).

II. MEDITATION

We need times of quiet so that we can listen to God, fostering awareness of God and learning to love him. Listen to this meditation on presence of God 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 "The Great Unknown" in *Christ is Passing By*. Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the Gospel for the feast of Pentecost.

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](#).

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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 with haste to the mountain (Lk 1:39)*. The Virgin, while pregnant, did not hesitate to set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Do I also try to anticipate others' needs, helping at home and doing favors or services that others need? Am I flexible and willing 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 details of affection and tenderness, attention and listening, personal grooming, etc.? Do I try to make his or her life pleasant?

3. Under the protection of Our Lady, do I ask with the faith of a Christian parent that my children or the children of others discover the

attractiveness of Jesus Christ? Would I be happy if they give themselves fully to him, if this is their vocation?

4. "It is not enough just to know she is our Mother and to think and to talk about her as such. She is your Mother and you are her son. She loves you as if you were her only child in this world" (*Friends of God*, 293). Do I treat Mary with the confidence of a little child in need of affection and security?

5. "Come, O Holy Spirit: enlighten my mind to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; inflame my will..." (Prayer composed by St. Josemaría in 1932). Do I count on the Holy Spirit's help in discovering how I can become more like Christ? How do his inspirations help me to improve my character and thus treat all those around me better and better?

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).* How do I allow myself to be accompanied in spiritual direction? As I meditate with the Lord on the advice I receive, do I try to discover what he is inviting me to?

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 through others and through what happens in my day?

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VI. MEDITATION

In the Gospels, Mary is shown to us as a mother, first at the Annunciation, as she becomes the mother of Jesus, and ultimately, at the foot of the Cross, when she is given to us as our mother. Mary

became the mother of God when she gave her "yes" to the angel Gabriel. She continues now as our mother, helping us from heaven with her tender, motherly intercession. 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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