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March Recollection Kit (2024)

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.

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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: In Silence with God (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: I am a Son of God (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Lent is a time to grow in awareness of God's love, manifested on the Cross. Jesus Christ, with his inexhaustible love, tenderness, and mercy towards all — sinners, the sick, the needy, children — shows us the path to a life of self-giving.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy (Mt 5:7) is not just a promise: it is an invitation to live in mercy and forgiveness. By forgiving, we open our hearts to receive forgiveness; and by embracing the gift of God's forgiveness in the sacrament of Confession, our lives are profoundly transformed.

Saint Joseph, the silent and faithful guardian of Jesus and Mary, offers us a model of discrete, committed charity. His figure, though hidden, shines with the light of vocational meaning. Through the example of Saint Joseph, we can learn that there is a *quid divinum* (that "divine something," as Saint Josemaría used to say) in every moment of our lives when we live it facing God.

"The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to *open our eyes to reality*. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears [...]. Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other,

denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another" (Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2024).

In this Lenten season, let us follow the example of Jesus and Saint Joseph, living our faith through prayer, fasting, and mercy. Lent leads us to a profound transformation, where charity becomes the center of our life, guiding us towards an Easter of resurrection and joy. In charity and service, in mercy and forgiveness, we discover the true meaning of our life and the fullness of living devoted to God and others.

II. MEDITATION

O God, you are my God... My soul longs for you (Ps 63). In prayer we recognize our sinfulness. But we can also learn to experience God's mercy

and unconditional love. Listen to this meditation on prayer and interior silence 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.

These meditations are 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 the most recent pastoral letter from the Prelate of Opus Dei, on obedience. Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the Gospel for Palm Sunday from chapter 11 of St. Mark.

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. The widow in the Gospel, from her poverty, gives *all that she had to live on* to the Temple treasury (Mk 12:44). Am I generous? Do I trust that God

will do great things with the possessions I place at his service?

2. *Be merciful as your Father is merciful (Lk 6:36).* Do I try to be merciful in order to obtain God's mercy and that of others? Do I ask God to increase my capacity for understanding, for overlooking the faults of others, and for seeing the good side of events and people around me?

3. "Do you hold grudges against your children? No, of course not. And in the same way, when we ask His forgiveness, our Lord always gives it. He forgives everything!" (St. Josemaria, quoted in the book *Antes, más y mejor* by L. Linares, Rialp, 2001). Am I holding any grudges? Do I ask our Lord for help to make my forgiveness more real and sincere?

4. *It is not you who have chosen me, it is I who have chosen you and appointed you that you should go and*

bear fruit (Jn 15:16). Do I ask the Holy Spirit for light to help me discover God's plans for me and give me the strength to follow his call? How can I redirect my life to contribute to God's plans for the world?

5. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men (Mt 4:19). Do I seek to renew my sense of mission as a Christian, confident that I can always count on the Lord's company? Do I think about and pray for souls with whom I can share Christ's joy?

6. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field (Mt 13:45). Do I spend time remembering how the Lord has guided me over the course of my life? Do I see my Christian vocation as a path to happiness?

VI. MEDITATION

Jesus wants to heal us and bring us to a realization of our dignity as children of God. Will we allow Him to do so? 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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