

May Recollection Kit (2020)

A recollection is a “mini-retreat,” a few hours of quiet prayer in which we can look at our lives in the presence of God. As we continue to face a global plague, this guide for a “recollection-at-home” will help you spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where you are.

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Who said you can't spend a few hours in quiet prayer in your very

own home? Even if you are not with other people or cannot make it to an Opus Dei center, these materials can help you to do a "recollection" wherever you are. Find a quiet place that allows you to recollect interiorly, a few hours that you can set aside without distractions, and use the following kit. Count on our prayers!

Download the "Recollection at Home" material as a PDF
(approximate duration: 120 minutes)

#1. INTRODUCTION

In his letter to the faithful for the month of May, Pope Francis reminded us that this month is traditionally dedicated to our Lady, as “a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary.” This

recollection guide is meant to help us do just that, turning to ask our Mother's help to be very faithful to her Son.

A recollection is a “mini-retreat”, a few hours of quiet prayer in which we can look at our lives in the presence of God. It can be difficult to find this time in the rush of ordinary life, and now the extraordinary rhythm of life in this pandemic presents its own challenges — but 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 ourselves in front of our Lord, to look at Him and to let Him look at us.

As we begin, we ask Mary for help, confident that (in the words of the Memorare) never was it known that anyone who fled to her protection, implored her help, or sought her intercession has ever been left unaided.

#2. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

How Mary leads us to Jesus

The Mother of Jesus accompanies us in our journey to her Son. In this meditation, we will consider Mary's role in the life of all Christians. You can listen to the 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.

#3. 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 **“Life of Mary: The Coming of the Holy Spirit” here**, or Pope Francis’ 2017 catechetical audiences on hope, beginning with **“The Promise that Gives Hope” here**.

#4. GOSPEL READING

After the spiritual reading, we recommend going to the Gospel to meditate on the life of Christ. You can read the account of the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel, beginning with chapter 5 [here](#).

#5. HOLY ROSARY

Pope Francis [encourages](#) all the faithful to “contemplate the face of Jesus with the heart of Mary our Mother” by praying the Holy Rosary at home this month. The 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](#).

#6. TALK: "Learning How to Pray"

The talk is a reflection on one aspect of Christian life, meant to help form concrete resolutions. Instead of an

in-person talk, [here](#) you can read [“To Know Him and To Know Yourself: How God Speaks to Us,”](#) an article about learning to pray. The language of prayer is mysterious and uncontrollable, but little by little by persevering in prayer we find that God changes our heart.

#7. 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 whole life is a response to God, who loves us and fills our hearts with His love. In the circumstances of this pandemic, Pope Francis tells us, the Lord is calling us to faith, “which is not so much believing that He exists, but coming to and trusting in Him.” How do I react to difficulties, whether they are small frustrations or great sorrows? Am I convinced that God is my Father and that He wants all His children to be happy? Am I trying to pray every day?

2. Do I find in the Eucharist - including when I cannot visit a church in person and have to “go” to Mass online - the source that renews my daily self-giving? Do I ask the Lord to teach me to give myself to others, as He gives himself for me?

3. Mary, Jesus' mother and my mother, walked beside her Son on the difficult road to Calvary and stayed at the foot of the Cross until He was taken down and laid in her arms. Am I trying to take care of the people around me, especially those who are lonely, sick, or afraid, finding creative ways to accompany them?

4. Our Lord performed His first miracle at the wedding at Cana, telling the servants to fill jars of water up to the brim, and when they obey, transforming the water into wine of such good quality that the steward asked why it hadn't been served earlier (*Jn 2:1-12*). Have I been struggling to set a schedule and use time well, "to the brim," not putting off the things I have to do out of laziness or apathy?

5. Jesus' first words to the disciples, who were fearfully gathered in an

upper room, after the Resurrection, are, “Peace be with you” (*Jn* 20:19). Have I overworked or been anxious about finishing things perfectly, as if I depended on my own abilities and not God’s? Have I felt the need to prove myself through my accomplishments?

6. “We go to Jesus — and we ‘return’ to him — through Mary,” (*The Way*, no. 495). There are many ways to have devotion to Mary: short prayers to our Lady; reciting the Angelus or *Regina Caeli* at noon; praying the Rosary... Am I trying to have recourse to my Mother?

#8. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

Together with Peter

Jesus entrusted his Church to the care of Peter and his successors. In

light of this truth, how can we correspond to the gift of unity and manifest our love to Pope Francis in deeds? You can listen to the 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.

#9. FINAL PRAYER

Prayer to Mary our Mother (Pope Francis)

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith.

“Protectress of the Roman people”, you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Amen.

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