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# December 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: Mary Went with Haste (30 minutes)

## III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: "Stand erect and raise your heads" (30 minutes)

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

At Christmas, our families and homes resonate with the echo of the greatest event in history: the Son of God came into the world, humble and small, to bring us salvation. In the silence of Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph, and the Child Jesus teach us that the true heart of Christmas lies in humility, charity, and service. We too are called to live this season by sharing generously, offering the best of ourselves in service to others, and strengthening the bonds that unite our families.

The Blessed Virgin Mary shows us how genuine love is expressed in concrete actions. Her spirit of service, seen especially in her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, is a lesson for our own lives, reminding us that even simple acts become great when done for others. It is also an invitation to look compassionately at the people we know who are facing difficult moments (illness, unemployment, loss of material possessions...) and to reaffirm their dignity as children of God.

The Holy Family serves as a model for our families today. From the simplicity of their days in Nazareth, we learn the value of sharing responsibility for daily tasks, fostering prayer and mutual love, and celebrating our Christmas traditions as signs that strengthen our faith. Setting up the Nativity scene, singing carols, and sharing with those in need are ways to come

together, not only in our own families but also as a larger Christian family in communion with the whole Church.

This spirit of unity and service takes on special significance as we approach the Jubilee of Hope in 2025. This Holy Year will be a time to rediscover the greatness of God's love revealed in the Redemption and to renew our commitment to be a light of hope in the world. Jesus is the door that opens our lives to love, reconciliation, and endless joy.

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## **II. MEDITATION**

The Gospel shows us Mary setting out quickly to visit her cousin Elizabeth. What is the real meaning of that haste, and how do we apply it to our lives when faced with God's will? 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 "In Your Presence." You can subscribe to it on Apple Podcasts, Breaker, Castbox, Google Podcasts, Overcast, Pocket Casts, RadioPublic, or Spotify.*

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### **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 *Admirabile Signum*, an apostolic letter from Pope Francis on the meaning and importance of the Nativity scene. Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the account of the birth of Jesus in St. Luke's Gospel.

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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.

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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. Do I thank God for the gift of divine filiation? Do I recognize God as a Father full of merciful love who has sent His Son to save us? Do I ask the Holy Spirit to help me live as a child of God?

2. Do I ask Jesus to help me to approach God the Father with complete trust? Do I see the model of my holiness in His words and deeds?



*"All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God"* (Rom 8:14). Do I invoke the Holy Spirit to call on my Father God with confidence?

3. Do I read and meditate on the Gospel every day? In my prayer, do I contemplate my life beside our Lord's? Do I invite my friends to read the Gospel?

4. Am I amazed by our Lord's hidden life, which illuminates my life as an ordinary Christian in the middle of the world? Do I realize that the hidden work of Jesus is a call to live face to face with God, with joy and generosity?

5. God always wants the best for me. Am I willing to do the will of my Father in everything, as Jesus did? Have I given my heart completely to God? Is there anything that does not correspond to my condition as a Christian and prevents me from being closer to God?

6. The Blessed Virgin exclaims in the Magnificat: *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior"* (Lk 1:46-47). Do I see Advent as a time of joyful preparation for the coming of the Lord?

7. *"And they came in haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger"* (Lk 2:16). How am I fostering an atmosphere of preparation for Christmas at home?

8. The Gospel says that Jesus lived subject to Joseph and Mary, and that his mother *"kept all these things carefully in her heart"* (Lk 2:51). Do I ask Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, to help me purify my heart so that I may live Christmas joyfully?

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## VI. MEDITATION

Jesus tells his disciples: "Stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand" (Luke 21:28). Listen to this meditation on Advent, a time of preparation for the Lord's coming, 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 "In Your Presence." You can subscribe to it on Apple Podcasts, Breaker, Castbox, Google Podcasts, Overcast, Pocket Casts, RadioPublic, or Spotify.*