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February 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.

02/05/2023

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: Being a Friend of Jesus (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: Bearing Witness to the Love of Christ (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"We can ask ourselves: how do we look upon others? How often do we see their faults and not their needs; how often do we label people according to what they do or what they think! Even as Christians we say to ourselves: is he one of us or not? This is not the gaze of Jesus: He always looks at each person with mercy and indeed with predilection. And Christians are called to do as Christ did, looking like Him especially at the so-called "distant ones." Indeed, Matthew's account of

the call ends with Jesus saying, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (*Mt 9:13*). And if any one of us considers themselves righteous, Jesus is far away. He draws near to our limitations, to our miseries, to heal them...

"This attractive witness, this joyful witness is the goal to which Jesus leads us with His loving gaze and with the outgoing movement that His Spirit raises up in our hearts. And we can consider whether our gaze resembles that of Jesus, to attract the people, to bring them closer to the Church. Let's think about that" (Pope Francis, general audience, 11-I-2023).

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II. MEDITATION

The Christian faith is not an abstract idea but a personal encounter with Jesus as a friend. He is not a distant

being far removed from our daily life, but talks to us and walks side by side with each person. Listen to this meditation on friendship with Jesus Christ [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 the apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, beginning with number 25-31 (“Activity That Sanctifies”). Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, about the call to be “salt and light” in St. Matthew'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](#), 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. *Jesus went up on the mountain and taught them: "Blessed are the poor in*

spirit.... Blessed are those who mourn... the meek... (Mt 5:1-12).

When Jesus taught us the beatitudes, he outlined a way of life after his own heart. When I talk to God, do I ask him to enlighten me on how I can live the beatitudes in my daily life?

2. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that through his poverty you might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). In my own economic and professional circumstances, have I allowed myself to be influenced by consumerism, or do I know how to put the things and time I have at my disposal at the service of my mission? Does living with God give me the serenity, confidence and sense of humor to face the lack of money, time, and physical or intellectual qualities I wish I had?

3. "The only good is to love God with all my heart and to be poor in spirit here below" (St. Thérèse of Lisieux). Do I try to understand that I have received everything I have freely from God and that the spirit of the Work leads me to use what I need to grow in my vocation?

4. *Those who sow in tears reap in songs of joy (Ps 125:5)*. How do I seek consolation and peace in Jesus? In relationships and conversations with others, how can I share peace, consolation, and joy?

5. *Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Mt 11:29-30)*. In what ways do I need the light and strength of the Holy Spirit to be meek and humble like our Lord in my dealings with others?

6. *You are the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13)*. "Try to ensure that people don't notice when you lend a helping

hand; try not to be praised or seen by anyone... so that, being hidden like salt, you may give flavour to your normal surroundings. And thus, as a result of your Christian outlook, you will be helping to give to everything about you a natural, loving and attractive tone" (*The Forge*, 942). Am I aware that to the extent that I am close to God, I will become the salt that the Lord wants to transform society?

7. "Among those around you — apostolic soul — you are the stone fallen into the lake. With your word and your example you produce a first circle... and another, and another... Wider each time. Now do you understand the greatness of your mission?" (*The Way*, 831). What example do I give to others through my life?

VI. MEDITATION

Jesus told his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” If we truly believe in Jesus, we will take to heart his command to make disciples of all the nations. 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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