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January 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.

01/03/2023

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: Lord, Let Me See Your Face (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: A Crisis of Saints (30 minutes)

I. INTRODUCTION

“Christians are indistinguishable from other men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life. Their teaching is not based upon reveries inspired by the curiosity of men. Unlike some other people, they champion no purely human doctrine. With regard to dress, food and manner of life in general, they follow the customs of whatever city they happen to be living in, whether it is Greek or foreign.

And yet there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country. Like others, they marry and have children, but they do not expose them. They share their meals, but not their wives.

They live in the flesh, but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends the law. Christians love all men, but all men persecute them. Condemned because they are not understood, they are put to death, but raised to life again. They live in poverty, but enrich many; they are totally

destitute, but possess an abundance of everything. They suffer dishonor, but that is their glory. They are defamed, but vindicated. A blessing is their answer to abuse, deference their response to insult. For the good they do they receive the punishment of malefactors, but even then they rejoice, as though receiving the gift of life. They are attacked by the Jews as aliens, they are persecuted by the Greeks, yet no one can explain the reason for this hatred.

“To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body. As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world. As the visible body contains the invisible soul, so Christians are seen living in the world, but their religious life remains unseen. The body hates the

soul and wages war against it, not because of any injury the soul has done it, but because of the restriction the soul places on its pleasures.

Similarly, the world hates the Christians, not because they have done anything wrong, but because they are opposed to its enjoyments.

“Christians love those who hate them just as the soul loves the body and all its members despite the body's hatred. It is by the soul, enclosed within the body, that the body is held together, and similarly, it is by the Christians, detained in the world as in a prison, that the world is held together. The soul, though immortal, has a mortal dwelling place; and Christians also live for a time amidst perishable things, while awaiting the freedom from change and decay that will be theirs in heaven. As the soul benefits from the deprivation of food and drink, so Christians flourish under persecution. Such is the

Christian's lofty and divinely appointed function, from which he is not permitted to excuse himself" (*From a Letter to Diognetus*, 5-6, an early Christian text from the 2nd century).

II. MEDITATION

In the biblical tradition, the contemplation of the face of God is associated with intimacy. How can we feel the face of God gazing upon us this year with all the hardships and challenges and joys that await? 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.

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 Chapter III of St. John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici* ("I Have Appointed You to Go Forth and Bear Fruit: The Coresponsibility of the Lay Faithful

in the Church as Mission," numbers 32-44). Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, from St. John.

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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.

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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. *And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them (...) Jesus grew in wisdom and age and favor before God and man (Lk 2:51-52).* How does the certainty that holiness consists of putting love into everyday life light up my life? In what aspects of my family life, work, etc., does Jesus call me to manifest that love?

2. "Either we know how to find our Lord in our ordinary life, or we will never find him. It is in the midst of the most material things on earth that we must sanctify ourselves" (*Passionately Loving the World*). Am I aware that many of these encounters with our Lord take place in my daily life, in my relationships with my spouse, children, and friends; as well as on the street, at work, and in my moments of rest?

3. Do I have in my soul the necessary trust in my Father God to ask him, like the little child, "for the moon" (*The Way*, 857)? With a child's confidence, what could I ask God for so that, in time, my family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors can discover Christ and form a personal relationship with him?

4. *They said to him: "Rabbi (which means 'Teacher'), where do you*

live?" (Jn 1:38-39) How do I share the deepest concerns and desires of my soul with the Lord? Do I ask him for help?

5. "In a Christian, in a child of God, friendship and charity are one and the same thing. They are a divine light which spreads warmth" (*The Forge*, 565). Do I foster friendship with Christ and with the people around me? Do I contemplate how Christ stays with each person, listening to them, sympathizing with them, taking care of their problems, etc.? Do I try to do the same?

6. *By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (Jn 13:35). Could I be even more consistent with my faith? Am I aware that words backed by personal example have the power to move hearts?

7. *We pray continually for you, that our God may make you worthy of his*

call and may fulfill every good resolve and work of faith by his power (2 Thess 1:11-12). When I look at my life, can I say that God continues to shed his light through me, wherever I am?

VI. MEDITATION

"A secret, an open secret: these world crises are crises of saints" (*The Way*, 301). Listen to this meditation about our mission in the world 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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