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July Recollection Kit

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.

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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: The Urgency of Being Fully Formed (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: The Charity of Friendship (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them 'the middle class of holiness.'

"Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which 'shares also in Christ's prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity.' We should consider the fact that, as Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross suggests, real history is made by so many of them. As she writes: 'The greatest figures of prophecy and sanctity step forth out of the darkest night. But for the most part, the formative stream of the mystical life remains invisible. Certainly the most decisive turning points in world history are substantially co-determined by souls whom no history book ever mentions. And we will only find out about those souls to whom we owe the decisive turning points in our personal lives on the day when all that is hidden is revealed.'

"The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer, which enables us better to perceive God's language, to interpret the real meaning of the inspirations we believe we have received, to calm our anxieties and to see the whole of our existence afresh in his own light. In this way, we allow the birth of a new synthesis that springs from a life inspired by the Spirit.

"Nonetheless, it is possible that, even in prayer itself, we could refuse to let ourselves be confronted by the freedom of the Spirit, who acts as he wills. We must remember that prayerful discernment must be born of a readiness to listen: to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient

ideas, our usual habits and ways of seeing things. In this way, we become truly open to accepting a call that can shatter our security, but lead us to a better life. It is not enough that everything be calm and peaceful. God may be offering us something more, but in our comfortable inadvertence, we do not recognize it" (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, nn. 7-8, 171-172).

II. MEDITATION

What does it mean to be formed? God wants us all to be saved and to come to the truth. 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 St. Josemaria's homily, "Open to God and Men," from *Friends of*

God. Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the Gospel, reading, for instance, St. Mark's account of the call of Andrew and Simon.

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 tax collector, standing far off, did not even dare to lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'O God, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner'*" (Lk 18:13). What attitude do I have when I talk to the Lord? Do I foster penance, the sorrow of love, and deep gratitude?

2. "*The Pharisee stood up and prayed thus with himself: 'O God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are'*" (Lk 18:11). Does my knowledge of God

and of myself lead me to see others with understanding and without superiority? Do I try to learn from everyone beginning with my spouse, my children, and those closest to me?

3. *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Lk 18:14).

When I place myself in the presence of God and recognize the truth about myself, do I consider that God's mercy heals my faults and strengthens that which is weakest?

4. St. Josemaría, contemplating the life of Martha and Mary, taught us: "Let us work. Let us work a lot and work well, without forgetting that prayer is our best weapon. That is why I will never tire of repeating that we have to be contemplative souls in the middle of the world, who try to convert their work into prayer" (*Furrow*, 497). In what way are my daily life, work, thoughts,

character, actions, etc. coherent with my faith?

5. Is my family my first priority? Do I often talk with my spouse to try to integrate our professional responsibilities with our dedication to the family?

6. "*Behold, now is the favourable time, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor 6:2). Does the consideration that it is in the present that the Lord is waiting for me help me live in the "today, now"?

VI. MEDITATION

God calls us to excellence, and He wants to transform our way of loving. We all value friendship, and Jesus shows us how to love others without competition or violence. 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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