

February 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.

02/01/2024

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 Presentation of Our Lord (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: God is Gracious (30 minutes)

I. INTRODUCTION

When we contemplate the beatitudes — blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness... — we discover that we have been called to be living reflections of God's goodness. These attitudes are not mere tasks to carry out; they express a deep faith manifested in concrete actions. Through them, we reveal the image of God in us to the world.

Jesus' miracles show the power of a vibrant and operative faith. They are vivid examples of how our faith can transform reality. Like the centurion, the Canaanite woman, the hemorrhaging woman, the paralyzed man, and Bartimaeus, we are called to trust in God's paternal providence, even when we don't understand his ways. Saint Josemaría summarized this with the words "*omnia in bonum*" ["All things work together for the good"], expressing the conviction that faith is an endless source of serenity, joy, and optimism.

Faith, nurtured and sustained by God's grace, transforms our ordinary lives. We face different situations, surprises, misunderstanding, and challenges at home or at work every day. Faith is a gift from God and leads us to seek his loving hand and recognize his presence and guidance in every circumstance. This perspective of faith, rooted in

humility and awareness of our need for God, enables us to see difficulties not as mere obstacles but as opportunities for growth. It allows us to implore God's help to be faithful so that his image may be seen more clearly in our lives.

II. MEDITATION

On 2 February, we celebrate the presentation of Jesus. While presenting Jesus in the Temple, our Lady learns that a sword is to pierce her soul, and yet she courageously accepts the cross God has willed for her. 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.

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 about the beatitudes in Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* (Chapter III: In the Light of the Master). Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent from chapter 1 of St. Mark.

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. *This is my body, which is given up for you. Do this in remembrance of me* (Mt 22:19). Am I aware of how great a gift the Eucharist, which God gives *me* and each of us, is? Do I participate in the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion often?
2. *Whoever eats this bread will live forever* (Jn 6:58). Do I thank God after receiving him in the Eucharist? Do I treat Jesus as king, doctor, teacher and friend? Do I trust Him with my joys, sorrows and difficulties?
3. *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes* (1 Cor 11:26). Am I aware that in the Holy Mass, the Sacrifice of Calvary is made present for the benefit of humanity? Do I try to be attentive and prayerful

as the celebration of the Mass begins?

4. Do I seek God's forgiveness in the sacrament of Confession on a regularly basis, and more often when I need it? When I can, do I try to help others access this beautiful sacrament before receiving Communion?

5. The first disciples *continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers* (Acts 2:42). Do I try to participate in Holy Mass with my whole family? Do I pray for them and for the whole Church, for the Pope and the Bishops, for the Work, for the people I know, and for my own needs?

6. *The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel* (Mk 1:15). Am I asking God for the grace to fall more in love with Him, especially

during Lent? Does contemplating Christ's Passion move me to renew my desire not to sin anymore? Do I make atonement when I see that God is offended?

7. But when you fast, perfume your head and wash your face, so that men will not know that you are fasting, but your Father, who is in secret, will reward you (Mt 6:17-18). Do I look for small ways to sacrifice myself and make life more pleasant for others? Do I try to smile often? How do I react to difficulties?

8. Bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so do you also (Col 3:13). Do I know how to let go of small quarrels and misunderstandings at home? Do I avoid quarreling in front of my children so that they do not form the wrong judgment? Do I ask the

guardian angels for help to discern what my spouse and my children need? Do I find it difficult to forgive?

9. *Whatever you do, do it heartily, as done for the Lord and not for men (Col 3:23).* In my job, do I try to finish my work well, for the love of God? Do I value of the hidden work that only God sees?

10. *Why do you worry about clothing? Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, and I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory could have clothed himself like one of them (Mt 6:28-29).* Am I too concerned about the things I have or want to have, buying the latest technology, or following trends? Do I know how to act temperately? Do I help my children to be responsible and encourage them to sacrifice small comforts, preferences, and vanities from time to time? Do I pay attention to how they dress and help

them to form an image that accurately reflects who they are?

11. The Gospel shows us Jesus having an intense conversation with a young man who *had many possessions*. He is not afraid to ask him for a lot: *Go, sell what you have... and come follow me* (Mk 10:17-23). Can others see the joy of a life generously given to God in the way I act? Do I talk about God to the people around me? Do I encourage others to show solidarity by giving some of their time to people in need? When I am afraid or ashamed to talk about God or live my faith, do I ask the guardian angels for help?

12. *Your own soul a sword shall pierce* (Lk 2:35). Do I discover the presence of Our Lady, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, at Mass and throughout my day, and do I love God's will as she does?

VI. MEDITATION

How can we live Lent to the full?
Listen to this meditation about
accompanying Jesus through prayer,
sacrifice, and giving of ourselves to
others 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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