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May Recollection Kit (2022)

A recollection is a “mini-retreat,” a few hours of quiet prayer when we look at our lives in God's presence. As we continue to face a global pandemic, this guide can help us spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where we are.

05/04/2022

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: See that I am Alive! (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: With Mary, Say Yes to God (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"The Church's first steps in the world were interspersed with prayer. The apostolic writings and the great narration of the Acts of the Apostles give us the image of a Church on the move, an active Church which, however, finds the basis and impulse for missionary action while gathered in prayer. The image of the early Community of Jerusalem is the point of reference for every other Christian experience. Luke writes in the Book of Acts: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of

bread and the prayers" (2:42). The community persevered in prayer.

"We find here four essential characteristics of ecclesial life: listening to the apostles' teaching, first; second, the safeguarding of mutual communion; third, the breaking of the bread; and fourth, prayer. They remind us that the Church's existence has meaning if it remains firmly united to Christ, that is, in community, in his Word, in the Eucharist and in prayer. It is the way we unite ourselves to Christ.

Preaching and catechesis bear witness to the words and actions of the Teacher; the constant quest for fraternal communion shields us from selfishness and particularisms; the breaking of the bread fulfills the sacrament of Jesus' presence among us. He will never be absent; it is really him in the Eucharist. He lives and walks with us. And lastly, prayer, which is the space of dialogue with

the Father, through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

"Everything in the Church that grows outside of these “coordinates” lacks a foundation. To discern a situation, we need to ask ourselves: in this situation, how are these four coordinates present — preaching, the constant search for fraternal communion — charity — the breaking of the bread — that is, Eucharistic life — and prayer. Any situation needs to be evaluated in the light of these four coordinates.

Whatever is not part of these coordinates lacks ecclesiality, it is not ecclesial. It is God who creates the Church, not the clamour of works. The Church is not a market; the Church is not a group of businesspeople who go forward with a new business. The Church is the work of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to us to gather us together. The Church is precisely the work of the

Spirit in the Christian community, in the life of the community, in the Eucharist, in prayer... always (...) Let us never forget Benedict XVI's words: "The Church does not grow through proselytizing, she grows by attraction". If the Holy Spirit — who is the one who attracts [people] to Jesus — is lacking, the Church is not there. There might be a beautiful friendship club, good, with good intentions, but not the Church, not synodality.

"(...) God gives love, God asks for love. This is the mystical root of the believer's entire life. In prayer, the first Christians, but we too who have come many centuries later, all live the same experience. The Spirit inspires everything. And every Christian who is not afraid to devote time to prayer can make his or her own the words of the Apostle Paul: "the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved

me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Prayer makes you aware of this. Only in the silence of adoration do we experience the whole truth of these words. We must recapture this sense of adoration. To adore, to adore God, to adore Jesus, to adore the Spirit. The Father, the Son and the Spirit: to adore. In silence. The prayer of adoration is the prayer that makes us recognize God as the beginning and the end of all of History. And this prayer is the living flame of the Spirit that gives strength to witness and to mission" (Pope Francis, General Audience, November 25, 2020).

II. MEDITATION

"This is the day the Lord has made!" We are called to live each day with faith in our risen Lord, a faith which

fills us with an active desire to share the joy of the Gospel with others, regardless of what they may think of us. To truly live this faith also means to amend our life and to not let our past sins weigh us down. 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 "Meditations in Manhattan." You can subscribe to that podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Pocket Casts](#), [Stitcher](#), [Podcast Addict](#), or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

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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 "I believe in the Holy Spirit," part of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the Gospel, reading, for instance, St. John's narration of Pentecost.

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

1. "*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*" (Lk 1:46-47). Do I know how to recognize and be amazed by the good things that God works in me and in the people around me (family, friends, etc.), like our Lady?
2. "*For He has looked upon the humility of his handmaid*" (Lk 1:48). How can I grow in humility; knowing how to appreciate, accept, understand, and give thanks?

3. *"And his mother treasured all these things in her heart"* (Lk 2:51). Following our Lady's example, how can I open my heart to the Lord in prayer, sharing my problems and my joys with him?
4. The Blessed Virgin Mary intercedes before God for our needs. Do I pray the Holy Rosary with piety and trust? If possible, do I try to gather my family to honor our Lady with this devotion?
5. *"Do whatever he tells you"* (Jn 2:5). "Many conversions, many decisions to give oneself to the service of God have been preceded by an encounter with Mary" (*Christ is Passing By*, 149). How do I turn to Mary as an ally to bring people closer to God?
6. *"The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of*

counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Is 11:2). What gifts of the Holy Spirit could I ask for myself or for others, to make us Christ-like wherever we are?

7. *"But the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"* (Gal 5:22-23).

Which of these fruits could I cultivate with the grace of God?

VI. MEDITATION

Mary's "yes" changed the course of history. How can we, too, learn to say "yes" to God? 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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