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November Recollection Kit (2021)

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.

11/06/2021

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: Do I Cast the Right Shadows? (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: When You Feel All Bent Over (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"The atmosphere of the Communion of Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed is present and alive in our hearts. The liturgy has enabled us to live it intensely in the celebrations of the past few days. In particular, visiting cemeteries has allowed us to renew our bond with those loved ones who have left us; death, paradoxically, preserves what life cannot retain. We discover how our deceased lived, what they loved,

feared and hoped, what they rejected, in a singular way from their tombs, that have remained almost as a mirror of their existence, of their world — challenging us and inducing us to reestablish a dialogue that death has put in jeopardy. Thus, the burial places are a kind of assembly, in which the living meet their dead and reaffirm the bonds of communion that death was unable to stop. And here in Rome, in these singular cemeteries, namely the catacombs, we see, as in no other place, the deep links to early Christianity, that we feel so close. When we step into the corridors of the catacombs in Rome — as in those cemeteries in our cities and in our towns — it is as though we were crossing an immaterial threshold and entering into communication with those who guard their past, made of joy and sorrow, of loss and of hope there. This happens because death concerns man today just as it

did then; and even if many things of the past have become estranged to us, death remains the same.

"In the face of this reality, the human being of every age searches for a glimmer of light that brings hope, that still speaks of life, and visiting graves also expresses this desire. But how should we Christians respond to the question of death? We respond with faith in God, with a gaze of firm hope founded on the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, death opens to life, to eternal life, which is not an infinite duplicate of the present time, but something completely new. Faith tells us that the true immortality for which we hope is not an idea, a concept, but a relationship of full communion with the living God: it is resting in his hands, in his love, and becoming in him one with all the brothers and sisters that he has created and redeemed, with all Creation. Our

hope, then, lies in the love of God that shines resplendent from the Cross of Christ who lets Jesus' words to the good thief: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43) resound in our heart. This is life in its fullness: life in God; a life of which we now have only a glimpse as one sees blue sky through fog."(Pope Benedict XVI, homily, November 3, 2012).

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II. MEDITATION

The month of November begins with the feast of All Saints, when we celebrate the whole people of God in Heaven and foster our own desire for holiness. You can listen to this meditation on being part of God's family, the family of the saints, 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*, pt. 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 "The Christian's Hope." Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the Gospel, reading, for instance, St. John's account of the resurrection of Lazarus in chapter 11 of his Gospel.

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. "Communion of Saints. — How shall I explain it? You know what blood-transfusions do for the body? Well that is more or less what the Communion of Saints does for the soul" (*The Way*, n. 544) Do I stop to think that by doing things well for love of God, in my work, study, and with my friends, I can help the whole Church? Does it fill me with hope to know that nothing is wasted, that the Lord will make all my efforts fruitful wherever and however he sees fit?

2. "You will find it easier to do your duty if you think of how your brothers are helping you, and of the help you fail to give them if you are not faithful" (*The Way*, n. 549). How

do I rely on the prayers of all those who love me?

3. "The holy souls in purgatory... They have such power with God!" (*The Way*, n. 571) Do I pray and offer suffrages for them and trust in the help they can give us?

4. "*If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him*" (Rom 6:8). Does the reality of death help me to put my own efforts to make the Kingdom of God grow into perspective?

5. . "Does your soul not burn with the desire to make your Father God happy when he has to judge you?" (*The Way*, n. 746) Do I understand that God does not accuse me, but is my advocate and savior? Am I at peace knowing that I am in God's hands?

6. "In the evening of our life we will be examined for love" (St. John of the

Cross). Do I try to rectify my intention, realizing that the measure of my works is not success or failure, but the love with which I carry them out? In what areas of my life could I better express that charity, mercy, and spirit of service which are the driving force of my actions?

7. *"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who is converted than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to be converted"* (Lk 15:7). How does it console me and fill me with joy to know that God always offers me his grace and, therefore, the possibility of beginning and beginning again?

VI. MEDITATION

An encounter with Jesus always brings great healing and dignity, and we can ask for the grace of

supernatural outlook, to see ourselves and our world as Jesus does. 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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