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January 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 "recollection-at-home" can help us spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where we are.

01/03/2021

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: New Year, New Struggle (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: Heart in the Right Place (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

As we start this new year, we ask our Lord for light and strength to see what He wants and to carry it out: "I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections and inspirations that you will communicate to me, and I beg your help to put them into effect." We can be sure that the Holy Spirit will help us begin again in spite of our weakness.

This trusting optimism leads us to give ourselves energetically to others

in friendship, which is a true apostolate. "Today," says Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*, "we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment."

II. MEDITATION

The new year comes with hope for personal improvement, and we pray for grace to change. You can 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*, 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 points 3 to 13 from Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz's pastoral letter on friendship.

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) with the new invocations to Mary recently added by Pope Francis **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. Does Jesus' charity for everyone — just and unjust, healthy and sick — encourage me? Do I try to care for all the people around me without excluding anyone, fighting temptations to resentment or bitterness?

2. *"Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart,"* our Lord tells us

(Mt 11:29). Have I experienced Jesus' peace and serenity? Do I ask Him to help me not to lose patience in the face of contradictions, great or small? Do I know how to rest in the Lord and confidently place my tribulations in His hands?

3. The Lord stopped to attend to the needs of each person: the woman with hemorrhage, Jairus, the Samaritan woman. Do I try to notice what others need? Do I try to set aside time to talk calmly with my spouse and each of my children? Do I listen to them?

4. *"Truly, I say to you, whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me"* (Mt 25:40). Do I see the Lord in others, especially in the sick?

5. *"When you stand up to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance"* (Mk 11:25). Do I ask forgiveness when I make mistakes or

offend others? Do I know how to forgive with all my heart, repeatedly? Do I realize that God has forgiven me much more than I have to forgive others?

6. In the Holy Mass we participate in Jesus' sacrifice: He gives himself to the Father out of love for all men. Do I struggle to love the people I find it more difficult to get along with, as Jesus teaches? Do I allow myself to remain cold or distant with certain people?

7. Through baptism, God takes possession of our soul, and helps us to fulfill his command to love one another as He has loved us (Jn 13:34). Do I show my love for my family in concrete ways and work with everyone in the family to take care of our home? Am I ready to sacrifice myself joyfully for others? Do I trust that the grace of the sacrament of marriage helps me love my spouse?

8. Philip tells Nathanael about his encounter with Jesus and invites him to meet Jesus himself: *"Come and see"* (Jn 1:44). Do I have many friends? Do I share the joyful wonder of my personal encounter with Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, with my friends? Do I pray for them regularly?

9. *"And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh"* (Mt 2:11). Do I see Jesus Christ in those who are most in need, and do I try to help them? Have I spent money wisely and proportionately over Christmas?

10. After the miracles of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus asks His disciples to collect the leftovers. Do I try to be clean and orderly when I work,

keeping the instruments I use in good condition, avoiding waste, etc.?

11. *"To be happy, what you need is not an easy life but a heart which is in love"* (Furrow, 795). Do I set my heart on the goods I have or want to have? Can others see the value of poverty in the example I set? In times of scarcity or economic difficulty, do I seek peace by turning to Jesus on the Cross?

12. Do I ask Holy Mary to help me put my hope in the Lord?

VI. MEDITATION

Where is my heart? What do I desire? Jesus teaches us to keep our hearts on the ultimate goal. You can listen [here](#):

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