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December 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. This guide can help us spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where we are.

05/12/2022

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: Advent: Waiting in Joyful Hope (30 minutes)

III. Spiritual Reading (10-15 minutes)

IV. Holy Rosary (20 minutes)

V. Examination of Conscience (5-10 minutes)

VI. Meditation: To Serve as Christ Served (30 minutes)

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I. INTRODUCTION

“It is significant that the brief account of the infancy of Jesus mentions, practically at the same time, his birth and the danger which he immediately had to confront. (...) Jesus escapes from the hands of Herod thanks to a special divine intervention and the fatherly care of Joseph, who takes him with his mother into Egypt, where they remain until Herod’s death. The Holy Family then returns to Nazareth, their hometown, and begins what for many years would be a hidden life,

marked by the carrying out of daily tasks with fidelity and generosity (cf. Mt 2:1-23; Lk 2:39-52). The fact that Jesus, from his very birth, had to face threats and dangers has a certain prophetic eloquence. Even as a Child, Jesus is a 'sign of contradiction'...

“In the infancy Gospel, the proclamation of life, which comes about in a wondrous way in the birth of the Redeemer, is thus put in sharp contrast with the threat to life, a life which embraces the mystery of the Incarnation and of the divine-human reality of Christ in its entirety. (...) The history of mankind, the history of salvation, passes by way of the family. In these pages I have tried to show how the family is placed at the centre of the great struggle between good and evil, between life and death, between love and all that is opposed to love. To the family is entrusted the task of striving, first and foremost, to unleash the forces

of good, the source of which is found in Christ the Redeemer of man. Every family unit needs to make these forces their own...

“What I offer, then, is an invitation: an invitation addressed especially to you, dearly beloved husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. (...) I speak with the power of his truth to all people of our day, so that they will come to appreciate the grandeur of the goods of marriage, family and life; so that they will come to appreciate the great danger which follows when these realities are not respected, or when the supreme values which lie at the foundation of the family and of human dignity are disregarded. May the Lord Jesus repeat these truths to us with the power and the wisdom of the Cross, so that humanity will not yield to the temptation of the ‘father of lies’ (Jn 8:44), who constantly seeks to draw people to broad and easy

ways, ways apparently smooth and pleasant, but in reality full of snares and dangers. May we always be enabled to follow the One who is ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’ (Jn 14:6).

“May the Holy Family, icon and model of every human family, help each individual to walk in the spirit of Nazareth. May it help each family unit to grow in understanding of its particular mission in society and the Church by hearing the Word of God, by prayer and by a fraternal sharing of life. May Mary, Mother of ‘Fairest Love,’ and Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, accompany us all with their constant protection” (St. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 1994).

II. MEDITATION

Advent is a season of hopeful waiting in which we are invited to listen more closely to the Lord. Listen to this meditation on responding with faithfulness, obedience, and love 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 it on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Pocket Casts, Stitcher, Podcast Addict, or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

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 "Marriage: A Christian Vocation". Afterward, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament, reading, for instance, the the Gospel for the 1st Sunday of Advent.

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. *"In those days Mary arose and went in haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of*

Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth" (Lk 1:39). Inspired by Our Lady's life, do I seek ways to serve others?

2. "Mary's humility is poured out in the Magnificat.... And you and I, who are - who were - proud, promise that we will be humble" (*Holy Rosary*, The 2nd Joyful Mystery). When do I praise and thank God? Is my humility born and nourished by the contemplation of God's great love?

3. "*As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb*" (Lk 1:41). Do I transmit the joy of living with Christ through my words and attitudes?

4. "In Bethlehem no one reserves anything for oneself. There one does not hear of my honor, nor of my time, nor of my work, nor of my ideas, nor of my tastes, nor of my money" (St. Josemaria, Letter, 14-II-1974, 2). Do I cultivate in my family the virtues that stand out in the

family of Bethlehem: mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience? Could I be more helpful at home, taking on tasks that I leave to others?

5. "As we contemplate the stable in Bethlehem or the home of the holy family in Nazareth, Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus occupy a special place in our hearts. What does the simple, admirable life of the holy family tell us? What can we learn from it?" (*Christ is Passing By*, 22).

6. "*They found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger*" (Lk 2:16). Do I ask the Holy Family to help me grow in love and self-giving in my marriage?

7. "*And they fell down and worshiped him; then they opened their coffers and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh*" (Mt 2:11). What could I place at the feet of Jesus? Am I convinced that he

receives what we offer him with a smile?

8. Do I learn from Mary and Joseph to live with what I need, while at the same time trying to give my family the well-being they deserve?

VI. MEDITATION

We find Jesus, and share in his victory, through service. 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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