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April Recollection Kit (2020)

A recollection is a “mini-retreat,” a few hours of quiet prayer in which we can look at our lives in the presence of God. As we live Holy Week against the backdrop of a global plague, this guide for a "recollection-at-home" will help you spend an hour or two in loving conversation with God, right where you are.

04/06/2020

Who said you can't spend a few hours in quiet prayer in your very own home? Even if you are not with other people or cannot make it to an Opus Dei center, these materials can help you to do a "recollection" at your home, in preparation for Easter. Find a quiet place that allows you to recollect interiorly, a few hours that you can set aside without distractions, and use the following kit. Count on our prayers!

Download the "Recollection at Home" material as a PDF
(approximate duration: 120 minutes)

#1. INTRODUCTION

"Sometimes we hear love described (you'll have heard me mention this more than once) as if it were a movement towards self-satisfaction,

or merely a means of selfishly fulfilling one's own personality.

—And I have always told you that it isn't so. True love demands getting out of oneself, giving oneself. Genuine love brings joy in its wake, a joy that has its roots in the shape of the Cross.” (The Forge, 28)

This guide is meant to help each of us foster the genuine love that leads to joy, entrusting everything to our Father God as we travel through the solemnities of Holy Week to Easter Sunday.

We are living through a strange and uncertain time—perhaps the most unusual Holy Week we have ever experienced—and we want to spend a few hours very close to our Lord, learning from His loving obedience “unto death, even death on a Cross” (Phil 2:8). The circumstances we are in, whatever they are, are the

material we have to sanctify and offer to our Lord.

A recollection is a “mini-retreat,” a few hours of quiet prayer in which we can look at our lives in the presence of God. It can be difficult to find this time in the rush of ordinary life, and now the new rhythm of daily life in this pandemic presents its own challenges. But the best way to profit from this recollection is to find a time and place we can pray and commit to spending it with our Lord: set aside other tasks, switch your phone to “airplane mode,” and grab a notebook. It is a good idea to jot down resolutions and ideas throughout the recollection, but the most important thing is to put ourselves in front of our Lord, to look at Him and to let Him look at us.

He is calling us to “seize this time of trial as a time of choosing,” as Pope Francis said in his prayer before the

Urbi et Orbi blessing on March 27. “It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.”

In 1937, when Saint Josemaria was trapped for four months in the Legation of Honduras during the Spanish Civil War, he told the young men with him: “Don't forget that you can be like the snow-covered volcanoes... On the outside, yes, you can be covered by the ice of monotony, of darkness; you will appear outwardly as if you were tied up. But inside, the fire will not cease to burn you, nor will you get tired of compensating for the lack of external action, with a very intense inner activity.”

A year later, in a letter to his children in Opus Dei, scattered by the conflict, he wrote that the way to keep that inner fire burning was to take good care of their interior life. That is our goal in this recollection: to cultivate our friendship with Jesus, asking Him to fill us with His own genuine, courageous love.

Normally, an essential aspect of a recollection is praying before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for extended periods of time. Under the current circumstances, this may not be possible: nevertheless, you can always pray a spiritual communion and "storm the Tabernacle" as St. Josemaría put it, letting your heart and mind wander to your nearest church to accompany our Lord there.

#2. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

How can we seek out God as Father amidst the challenging situation we face today? You can reflect and pray about this as you listen to the 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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#3. 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 the article "Holy Week: He Loved Them to the End" which you can access [here](#), or "Beside the Cross of Jesus" from *Mary: A Life Close to Jesus* [here](#).

#4. GOSPEL READING

After the spiritual reading, we recommend going to the Gospel to meditate on the life of Christ. You can find Saint John's account of the Last Supper, beginning with chapter 13, [here](#).

#5. 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](#).

#6. TALK

Normally, the talk is a reflection on one aspect of Christian life, meant to help us form concrete resolutions. Instead of an in-person talk, you can read the article "[A God Who Lets Things Happen? The Mystery of Evil and Suffering](#)" [here](#).

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#7. 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. When Jesus ascended to the Father, he said to the Apostles: "Know that I am with you every day" (Mt 28:20). We too can feel lonely at times. When I feel greater restlessness or suffering, do I try to seek the presence of the Lord, to find in Him the strength and peace for my soul?

2. Jesus spoke on many occasions about the "need to pray always and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). In my current situation, do I try to spend time in prayer? Knowing that prayer is a path that can last a lifetime, do I try to make my interaction with God in prayer more affectionate every day? Do I tell Him that I love Him,

and ask Him to teach me to discover Him every day?

3. "I have redeemed you and called you by name" (Is 43:1). Saint Josemaria took great comfort in this line from Isaiah. In what ways can I make more present in my life the reality that God loves me madly and calls me by name? It is a good time to thank Him for His call, to apologize for the times when I have preferred not to listen ... and also to ask myself: how can I answer His call these days?

4. In an interview, Saint Josemaria said: "The desire to want to work for the common good is not enough; the way, for this desire to be effective, is to educate people capable of giving to others the fruit of that fullness that they have reached" (*Conversations*, no. 73) Am I excited by the idea of forming myself very well in order to improve the world? Have I thought

about how I can take care of my spiritual direction and my Christian formation during this exceptional time?

5. "There is something holy, divine, hidden in the most common situations, that each of you must discover" (*Conversations*, no. 114). Saint Josemaría was talking about looking for Jesus in the ordinary: study, family and social life... Am I trying to find Jesus in my current circumstances? Do I tell Him to count on me to take care of the people who are close to me, and those who continue to contact me through the many different means of communication that make this possible?

6. "What is the secret of perseverance? Love. Fall in love, and you will never leave him" (*The Way*, no. 999). With the grace of God, who fills our hearts with his Love, it is

possible to be faithful to God all your life. How can I remember more often that this grace will never be lacking? For whom do I pray for that same grace?

#8. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

Our forced isolation and deprivation have a silver lining. Christ's prayer in the Gospels leads us to the wonderful discovery that God is truly our possession and treasure. You can listen to the meditation "**Letting God Be God**" 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.

#9. FINAL PRAYER

Act of Entrustment to Mary (Pope Saint John Paul II)

O Virgin Mary, Jesus on the Cross wanted to entrust us to you, not to lessen but to reaffirm his exclusive role as Saviour of the world.

If in the disciple John all the children of the Church were entrusted to you, the happier I am to see the young people of the world entrusted to you, O Mary. To you, gentle Mother, whose protection I have always experienced, this evening I entrust them to you once again. All seek refuge and protection under your mantle. You, Mother of divine grace, make them shine with the beauty of Christ!

The young people of this century, at the dawn of the new millennium, still live the torment that derives from sin, from hatred, from violence, from

terrorism and from war. But it is also the young to whom the Church looks confidently, knowing that with the help of God's grace, they will succeed in believing and in living as Gospel witnesses in present day history.

O Mary, help them to respond to their vocation. Guide them to the knowledge of true love and bless their affections. Support them in times of suffering. Make them fearless heralds of Christ's greeting on Easter Day: *Peace be with you!* With them, I also entrust myself once again to you and with confident affection I repeat to you: *Totus Tuus ego sum!* I am all yours!

And each one of them cries to you, with me: *Totus Tuus! Totus Tuus!*

Amen.

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