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July Recollection Kit (2020)

Who said you can't spend a few hours in quiet prayer in your own home? Even if you are not with other people, these materials can help you to "recollect" for a few hours wherever you are.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today we are immersed in messages. We rarely spend half an hour without sending or receiving a text,

email, or status update. They often have multimedia content — gifs, videos, images — attached, and are short, clear messages that either distract us or make us reflect.

Our Lord's preaching was full of short messages. He frequently taught with parables: short, symbolic stories containing moral teachings. As with status updates today, He added vivid examples, images taken from everyday life. And He imbued them with a rich and far-reaching meaning, to teach us how we must act to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Many people send out tweets about Christ's message to help others understand it better. One person doing so is Pope Francis. Through his Twitter account [@Pontifex](#), he shows us that social media, well used, is an effective messenger for short but rich messages.

“It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply ‘connected’; connections need to grow into true encounters. We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves. We need to love and to be loved. We need tenderness. Media strategies do not ensure beauty, goodness and truth in communication. The world of media also has to be concerned with humanity, it too is called to show tenderness. The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network not of wires but of people. The impartiality of media is merely an appearance; only those who go out of themselves in their communication can become a true point of reference for others. Personal engagement is the basis of the trustworthiness of a communicator” (Pope Francis, 48th World Communications Day, 2014).

In the July recollection, through the meditations and various readings, we will consider some important

topics: the good use of time, and the need to form ourselves well in order to make the talents God has given us bear fruit and bring God's love to others.

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 extraordinary rhythm of life in this pandemic presents its own challenges — but the best way to enjoy 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 “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 ourselves in front of our Lord, to look at Him and to let Him look at us.

We begin, as always, asking the Holy Spirit for grace to receive the messages He wants to send in this time of reflective prayer.

2. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

We all have inner battles, but we fight with optimism because Jesus Christ is on our side. God is determined to make us saints. Listen to this meditation by Fr. Henry Bocala on the need to struggle in our life here:

Life is a Tug-of-War

The most important part of the meditation is your personal conversation with our Lord, using the priest's prayer to inspire your own.

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 this brief excerpt from Saint Josemaria's homily “Time is a Treasure” in *Friends of God*.

4. GOSPEL READING

After the spiritual reading, we recommend going to the Gospel to meditate on the life of Christ. You can read chapter 25 from Saint Matthew's Gospel on the good use of time.

5. 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. "Apostolate is love for God that overflows and communicates itself to others" (Saint Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 122). Do I truly want to fall in love with God and then spread this love to those around me? Does my desire to assist souls lead me to strive to draw closer to God?

2. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you* (2 Thess 3:1). Is my prayer filled with the ambition to enkindle many souls

with the fire of Christ's heart? Am I convinced that to make God known I have to sincerely love others?

3. "Jesus, Our Lord, wants us to proclaim today in a thousand languages (and with the gift of tongues, so that everyone learns how to apply it to their own lives), in every corner of the world, the message that is as old as the Gospel, and like the Gospel new" (*Letter 9 January 1932*, no. 91. See *Andres Vazquez de Prada, The Founder of Opus Dei*, Vol. I, p. 293). Do I go to the Holy Spirit while preparing or attending the apostolic activities, asking for help to make the announcement of Christ lovable and attractive? Do my words convey the perennial newness of the Gospel?

4. *To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away (Mt 25:15)* Do I thank our Lord

for the talents He has given me and do I look for creative ways to put them at the service of my apostolic mission? Do I realize that this is the best way to make them bear fruit?

5. *Learn to do good (Is 1:17)*. How can I put more care into my own formation, thinking about the help I can give to many souls? Am I willing to learn continuously, with humility and simplicity?

6. *My chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain ... for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord ... Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear (Is 65:23-24)*. Moved by faith, do I take heart when facing obstacles and look for new ways to help those around me, even when someone does not respond as I had hoped?

6. MEDITATION (GUIDED PRAYER)

In the Holy Eucharist, we contemplate the mystery of a God who gives himself to us as food. Listen to this meditation by Fr. Joe Keefe on the Church's understanding of the *fractio panis* (breaking of the bread) as the gesture of Jesus' self-giving which gives life to the world:

Body Broken, Body Given

The most important part of the meditation is your personal conversation with our Lord, using the priest's prayer to inspire your own.

7. HOLY ROSARY

Pope Francis recently said via Twitter: "Contemplating together the face of Christ with the heart of Mary, as we pray the Rosary, will make us more united as a spiritual family and will help us to overcome this trial. I will pray for you, especially for those

who are suffering the most. Please, pray for me.”

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**.

8. RESOLUTIONS

Make a few brief and specific resolutions that you have seen in your prayer and that you will try to carry out this month.

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