

A photograph of a man with his arms raised in a wide, open landscape. He is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the horizon. The background features rolling hills or mountains under a warm, golden sunset sky.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 1

THE ACTS OF FAITH,
HOPE CHARITY & DAILY
OFFERING

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Preparing for the Journey

listen



Preparing for our Journey is an apt way of describing the Orientation Week. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, we desire to become ardent disciples of Jesus, committed to becoming saints for His greater praise and service. Each day of our preparation, therefore, is important. On Day One, we will focus our attention on the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, and the Morning Offering. We will make them our first acts of prayer and try to begin every day with them. Many who begin their day with the Sign of the Cross, followed by the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Morning Offering, have noticed a deepening of their faith in the Blessed Trinity, a greater understanding and commitment to their relationship with God, and an increased enthusiasm to witness to the world that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

On Day Two, we will examine our Prayer to the Holy Spirit so that we will come to a deep appreciation of the Holy Spirit's presence and role in our lives. Through the Holy Spirit you will come to know Jesus more intimately, and the Father through Jesus. You will find yourself being re-created in the image and likeness of Jesus and will become a credible witness for the Kingdom of God!

On Day Three, we will reflect on the importance of Laying the Proper Basis for a Personal Relationship with Jesus. An encounter with Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God forms the basis for a personal relationship with Jesus, and through Him with the Blessed Trinity. Such an encounter brings about a radical change in our lives because we come to know Jesus as Emmanuel.

On Day Four, we will become acquainted with the Examination of Conscience and the Act of Contrition which forms a central component of our nightly review. The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God, examining how we have given ourselves to God in generous service in response to God's total gift of Himself to us through Jesus.



Preparing for the Journey

The Act of Contrition highlights the two pillars of discipleship that we try to strengthen through the Examination of Conscience: a serious turning away from sin, and a sincere turning toward God for help and strength. Sincere repentance leads to a serious commitment to the teachings of Jesus leading to amending one's life.

On Day Five, we will learn how to Prepare well for your Daily Face to Face with God. When your preparation for prayer has become consistent, your ability to be with God in prayer will become easier. Your preparation for prayer will have created an inner environment in your soul that is conducive and receptive to the Presence of God and all that He wants to offer you.

On Day Six, we will consider the Importance of creating the Right Environment for Prayer. Developing stillness in prayer is a priority, as it paves the way toward creating a listening heart. And beginning your prayer invoking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit is a must if your discipleship is to become serious and committed. Asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for you before her Son will go a long way in helping you.

On Day Seven, you will appreciate The necessity of being magnanimous and generous in your relationship with God, Jesus gave you His all and to receive new life, you need to give Him your all. God bless you! You are in our daily prayers!



listen



Face to Face WITH GOD

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Act of Faith is a creedal statement. In saying it with deliberate purpose, we profess our belief in the Blessed Trinity: one God in three divine Persons. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God who became our incarnate Savior, and as our Lord will come to judge the living and the dead. We also believe that the Magisterium (Teaching Authority) of the Church has been divinely ordained. Therefore, God cannot and will not deceive us when we accept wholeheartedly the teachings of the Church. To believe is to surrender to the Father through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Through our surrender to God, we promise to live in obedience to Jesus and His teachings as interpreted by His Church.

In praying the Act of Faith very slowly, meaning every word you say, you are pledging to even die to uphold these truths. It is a prayer that can only be done through Jesus in the saving power of the Holy Spirit who will re-create us in the image and likeness of Jesus.

The Act of Hope is a creedal statement as well. We trust God who is everlastingly trustworthy and reliable. God has made promises to us that He continues to fulfill through His Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Therefore, we can confidently hope for forgiveness of sin, the help of God's sanctifying presence with us, and our sharing in His eternal life. Our hopes will be fulfilled through Jesus who is our Savior and Lord.

In praying the Act of Hope very slowly, meaning every word you say, you are pledging your total dependence and reliance on the Blessed Trinity. Such total trust and dependence is possible because through Jesus we have been brought into covenant union with the Blessed Trinity with our wholehearted consent and commitment.

The Act of Charity is a covenant statement in that we are pledging our undying commitment to God as the center of our lives. We can pledge our lives to God because in the first place the Father has shared everything of His divine life with us through His Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit. We are pledging, equally importantly, our undying commitment to loving our neighbor as God loves us.

At heart in our relationships with humans is the issue of forgiveness. We are committing ourselves to repentance for our wrongful acts and forgiveness of others who have offended us. Such total commitment is possible because we believe that what is impossible for us will be made possible by the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Act of Charity is a creedal statement as well.



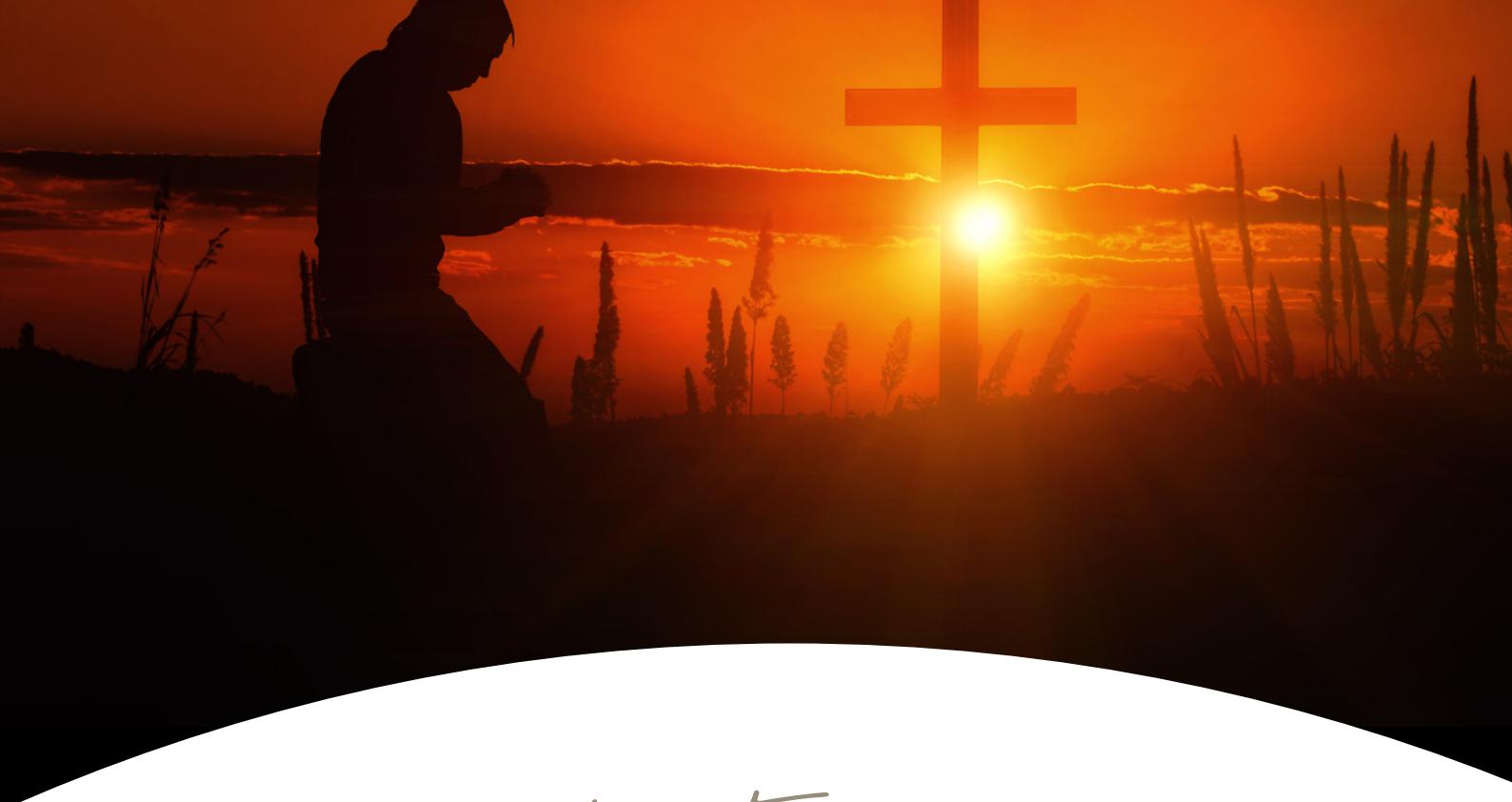
Face to Face WITH GOD

In praying the Act of Charity very slowly, meaning every word you say, you are offering yourself to God as a covenant partner, making God and His covenant family the center of your life and service. Such uncompromising action is possible because Jesus has brought us into covenant union with the Blessed Trinity, with our wholehearted consent and commitment.

The Morning Offering is a daily renewal of one's life and purpose as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is a daily renewal of one's vows, highlighting the disciple's commitment to covenant union with God and His covenant family. We make our prayer to Jesus who as our Intercessor before the Father, brings down the continual Outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us and His covenant family. Our prayer is a participation in Jesus' prayer to the Father made through His Sacrifice on the Cross.

Jesus intercedes for us as the Lamb who was slain. In offering our prayers, works, joys and sufferings of the day, we are offering ourselves, without reservation. We can do this because our offering of self is made in union with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross which we celebrate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. Mary and the whole heavenly hosts are participating continually in the Sacred Mysteries of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice on the cross.

Mary plays a central role in this supreme act of her Son's continual intercession on our behalf. She is the Queen Mother of God's covenant family. Jesus has entrusted us to her loving care and protection. Mary thinks, acts, and lives in Jesus. We therefore offer our prayer through her immaculate heart as well.



Face to Face WITH GOD

As disciples, our lives are centered in Jesus. We live to fulfil His intentions: the salvation of the world, reparation for our sins and the sins of others, and the reunion of all Christians. Like St. Paul, we make up for the sufferings of Christ in His body. And we dedicate our lives for the reunion of all Christians in the one Catholic Church that Jesus founded. As a further expression of Jesus' intercessions, we pray for His Body, the Church: the intentions of our bishops, of all apostles of prayer, and in particular, for the intentions recommended by our Holy Father.

Many who begin their day with the Sign of the Cross followed by the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Morning Offering, have noticed a deepening of their faith in the Blessed Trinity, a greater understanding and commitment to their relationship with God, and an increased enthusiasm to witness to the world that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

PRAAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!



Examination of **CONSCIENCE**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O my God, I thank you for all the graces and blessings which I have received from you this day. Express to God your gratitude as you recall the blessings and graces that were present today: For what are you grateful?

Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

Step One: Commitment to daily prayer is the mark of serious discipleship.

- As you begin your journey, try to set aside some time for prayer and reflection in the morning and evening. As a good start, try to review the written and audio reflections each day. If you can't do them every day, you can try to do them all by the end of the week.
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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

A photograph of a man with light brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt. He is standing on a rocky mountain peak, facing away from the camera towards a range of mountains in the background. The sky is a warm, golden-yellow color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. His right arm is raised high above his head, and his left hand is resting near his heart.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 2

PRAYER TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer highlights the special place and function of the Holy Spirit in our lives as disciples of Jesus. In His Great Discourse, Jesus gives us a vivid description of the Holy Spirit's function. The Holy Spirit comes to those who invite Him, who are willing to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. Only in the Holy Spirit can we receive new life in Jesus or be reborn. Very deliberately, therefore, we ask the Holy Spirit to come and rule in our hearts as our Guardian. We ask the Holy Spirit to overshadow us with His gentle wisdom and power.

Whenever the temple was consecrated, in Exodus 40:34 and 1Kings 8:10, the presence of God overshadowed it. God made it clear that He was Emmanuel, God dwelling among His people. Similarly, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be made into temples of the Blessed Trinity, becoming God's abode. So, in our prayer we ask that the Holy Spirit overshadow us as well. Jesus said, "The Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming" (John 16:13). In other words, the Holy Spirit will always point us in the direction of Jesus, re-creating us in the image and likeness of Jesus, thus making us very pleasing to the Father.



Face to Face WITH GOD

So, we ask the Holy Spirit to purify our minds and hearts so that we will live according to the teachings of Jesus. We can only know the Person of Jesus through accepting His teachings. With gratitude and joy, we state the amazing truth that the Holy Spirit is the Guardian of our souls. He is our Advocate given to us by the Father at the request of Jesus, working tirelessly on our behalf. We firmly believe that He will bring us into God's heart. We ask for the grace to be docile and submissive to His wisdom and guidance, as Mary was in her submission to the Holy Spirit, so that our lives may be a sweet-smelling offering in God's sight. And we pray this prayer in Jesus' name.

When you invoke the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit throughout the day, you will experience Him as the Keeper of your soul. Through the Holy Spirit you will come to know Jesus more intimately, and the Father through Him. In living under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, you will become a credible witness for the Kingdom of God! And you will find yourself being re-created in the image and likeness of Jesus!

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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The Act of Contrition

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What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

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What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 3

LAYING THE BASIS FOR A
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH JESUS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

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Act of Charity

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Face to Face WITH GOD

listen



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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An encounter with Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God forms the basis for a personal relationship with Jesus, and through Him with the Blessed Trinity. Such an encounter brings about a radical change in our lives because we come to know Jesus as Emmanuel. We come to know Him as God in our flesh who knows everything about our human condition. He became our flesh so that He could take upon Himself the sin of our human condition and offer us the indescribable gift of His righteousness. Jesus became one of us so that through Him we could become like God! The Holy Spirit brings about our re-creation into the image and likeness of Jesus Himself.

We know that we have been encountered by Jesus when we experience a paradigmatic change in our lives. Our lives are no longer the same as they have taken on a miraculous dimension. We are orbiting in a different galaxy, moving around the one and only Son of God! In the case of Saul who was on his way to Damascus to persecute and arrest the followers of the Way, Jesus encountered him with a divine magnetic force that radically transformed him. From being a persecutor of the followers of Jesus whose name he was determined to erase from the annals of history, Saul became His most ardent disciple. From being filled with hate and murder toward Jesus and His disciples, he accepted Him as His Savior and Lord! To this day and until the end of time, we will continue to experience the salutary effects of Paul's transformation through Jesus!



Face to Face WITH GOD

In human relationships, we begin a meaningful connection with the other when our hearts have been stirred significantly by their presence. There is a definite sense that one is enriched and ennobled in the other's presence. The dynamics between the two, experienced in words, feelings, gestures, inner thoughts and emotions, slowly but surely coalesce into a relationship where loyalty, commitment, and shared values become the priority. Within their relationship of knowing each other, they then move into wanting to know as much as possible about the other. Knowing about each other gives them a deeper appreciation of their attraction to each other in the first place.

The same is true in our relationship with Jesus. We first have to encounter Jesus so that His presence leaves us deeply stirred. We've got to experience in some way the immensity of the Father's love that allowed His Son Jesus to become our sin so that we might become His righteousness! In this encounter with Jesus, we are given new eyes and heart to understand ourselves and the world differently. We then relate to everybody and every creature differently. Prayer is no longer an imposition. Rather, our hearts oblige us to respond generously and lovingly to God's immense love for us, as befitting the beloved. In knowing God, there is then an increased desire to know as much as possible about God, leading us to delve into Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the wisdom of the saints. Such knowledge will slake our thirst for God and yet leave it remaining insatiable.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 4
THE EXAMINATION OF
CONSCIENCE & NIGHTLY
REVIEW

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

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Face to Face WITH GOD

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PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Examination of Conscience or Nightly Review of the day is a significant practice in a disciple's formation. All the saints have emphasized the importance of such an assessment. The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God, examining how we have given ourselves to God in generous service in response to God's total gift of Himself to us through Jesus. It is fitting that we begin our examination of conscience by invoking the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. We suggest that you begin your review with the Prayer to the Holy Spirit that we use in GEM. The next step is to recall the blessings and graces that we have received from God during the day. Through baptism we were buried into the death of Christ, and rose to new life, God's own life, through the resurrection of Jesus. We belong to God, and the Blessed Trinity has become ours through Jesus. Every single day, God is overwhelming us with grace upon grace, suffusing our lives with His tender mercies and unconditional love. Every single day of our lives, then, is an opportunity to praise, adore, and thank God for His indescribable goodness and loving kindness. During this step, we engage in praise and thanksgiving to God for the blessings and protection we have received. So, with thanksgiving in our hearts, we go over our day, from morning to afternoon to evening, and see how God was Emmanuel, with us and in us.



Face to Face WITH GOD

We then do an examination of our conscience to see how we responded to God. Did we succumb to temptation and commit deliberate sin? Hopefully, as we advance in discipleship, deliberate sin will not be the norm. As disciples, we owe it to our Savior and Lord to honestly and humbly acknowledge our sins, and make an act of repentance. After we have examined our conscience and are ready to ask and receive forgiveness, we pray the following Act of Contrition.

We encourage you to journal on the following questions: What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual practice, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!



Examination of **CONSCIENCE**

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The Act of Contrition

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Encouragement for the Journey

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My Notes

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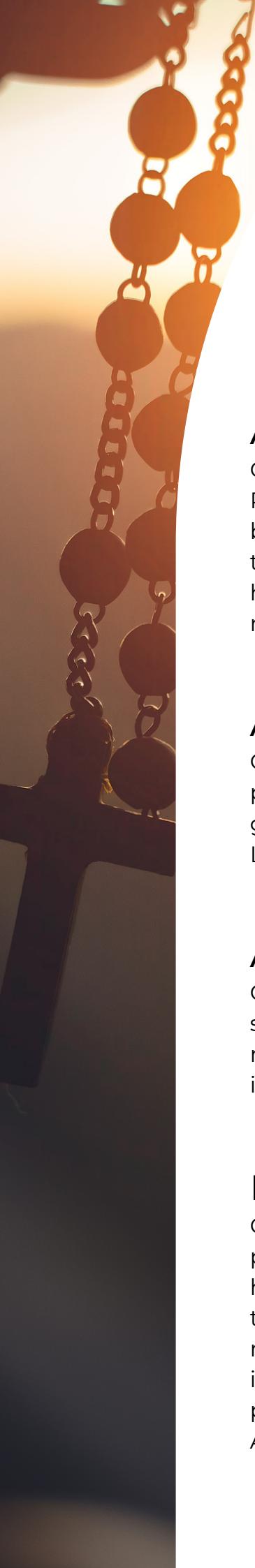
A photograph of a man with light brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt. He is standing on a rocky mountain peak, facing away from the camera towards a range of mountains in the background. The sky is a warm, golden color of a sunset or sunrise. His right arm is raised high above his head, and his left hand is resting near his heart.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 5

PREPARE FOR YOUR DAILY
FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Face to Face WITH GOD

listen



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The saints give us wholesome advice as to how we can prepare well for our daily visit with God. I like to call it our daily face to face with God to stress the necessity of being honest and transparent with God. A truly meaningful relationship can only prosper in openness and trust. St. Ignatius of Loyola, for instance, offers some valuable suggestions in *The Spiritual Exercises*. Our preparation for our morning face to face with God begins the previous evening with our daily examination of conscience. Through this beautiful exercise, we have made ourselves aware of God's presence by recalling His numerous blessings and graces, and have taken stock of our discipleship by examining our conscience. In this way we moved toward gratitude and repentance, culminating in the Act of Contrition. If we are in a GEM small group or are doing one of the manuals, we will read the previous evening the Scripture verses and reflection that we will be praying with in the morning. While falling asleep, we will follow St. Ignatius' advice and recall briefly the subject matter of our morning prayer. Thus, we go to bed with God on our lips and in our hearts. If you should wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, try to develop the habit of recalling the presence of God and being in prayer. Over time you will gradually develop the practice of the presence of God throughout the day. In this way, the Holy Spirit will create in you a sanctified Unconscious, a definite sign that He is healing your past hurts and sin and you are able to live in the present moment.



Face to Face WITH GOD

To continue with the preparation before your morning visit with God, my practice has been to first thank God for a good night's rest, and then immediately to pray the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Morning Offering. After that I do the Prayer to the Holy Spirit from God's Embrace, and pray a Hail Mary, asking our Blessed Mother to accompany me during the day with her intercession and love. Then I prepare myself for my morning prayer by doing what St. Ignatius suggests which is to recall the subject matter of your prayer. When your preparation for prayer has become consistent, your ability to be with God in prayer will become easier. Your preparation for prayer will have created an inner environment in your soul that is conducive and receptive to the Presence of God and all that He wants to offer you.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

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WHO DO YOU SAY I AM

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 6

CREATING THE RIGHT
ENVIRONMENT FOR PRAYER

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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Face to Face WITH GOD

listen



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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As human beings, we are greatly influenced by our environment. The sights and sounds around and within us influence our prayer positively or negatively. This is one important reason why our churches are built to create the proper sacred space to encounter God. In her liturgy, the Church has always striven to provide the ideal environment to celebrate God's life appropriately in the Eucharist. Through form and ritual, like postures and gestures by the priest and congregation, the Church has fostered a sacred environment. Ignorance of the Sacred in our liturgical celebrations can lead to our participation and benefit from the Eucharistic Celebration becoming minimal. Try, therefore, to get to Church several minutes before Mass begins in order to transition properly into the Sacred liturgical Space.

It makes sense as well to create a proper environment for prayer at home. Some like to pray in the same place where they have a candle burning before a crucifix or icon. Others like to pray in the dark, assuming that they have done their spiritual reading earlier in preparation for prayer. Praying in the same place and possibly at the same time will foster an easier transition into communion with the Divine.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Novices in the art and practice of prayer, struggle with a wandering mind as they try to stay focused on God. This difficulty creates restlessness in their bodies, and they tend to move about and fidget. Sometimes they are so scattered, they are not able to immerse themselves into prayer. Hence, developing stillness in prayer is a priority, as it paves the way toward creating a listening heart. One way of doing so is to practice remaining motionless for the whole period of prayer. Initially, your threshold might not extend beyond a few minutes. With perseverance, you will gradually be able to sit still for thirty minutes. Your body will become an integral part of your prayer, and no longer a hindrance to your communion with God. You will pray in the spirit of Psalm 46: 11: "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth!" Finally, beginning your prayer invoking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit is a must if your discipleship is to become serious and committed. Asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for you before her Son will go a long way in helping you. It is important to remember that Mary is the Gebirah, the great Lady or Queen-Mother of God's covenant family.

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WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ORIENTATION WEEK, DAY 7

PRAY WITH MAGNANIMITY
AND GENEROSITY

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING Prayer

listen



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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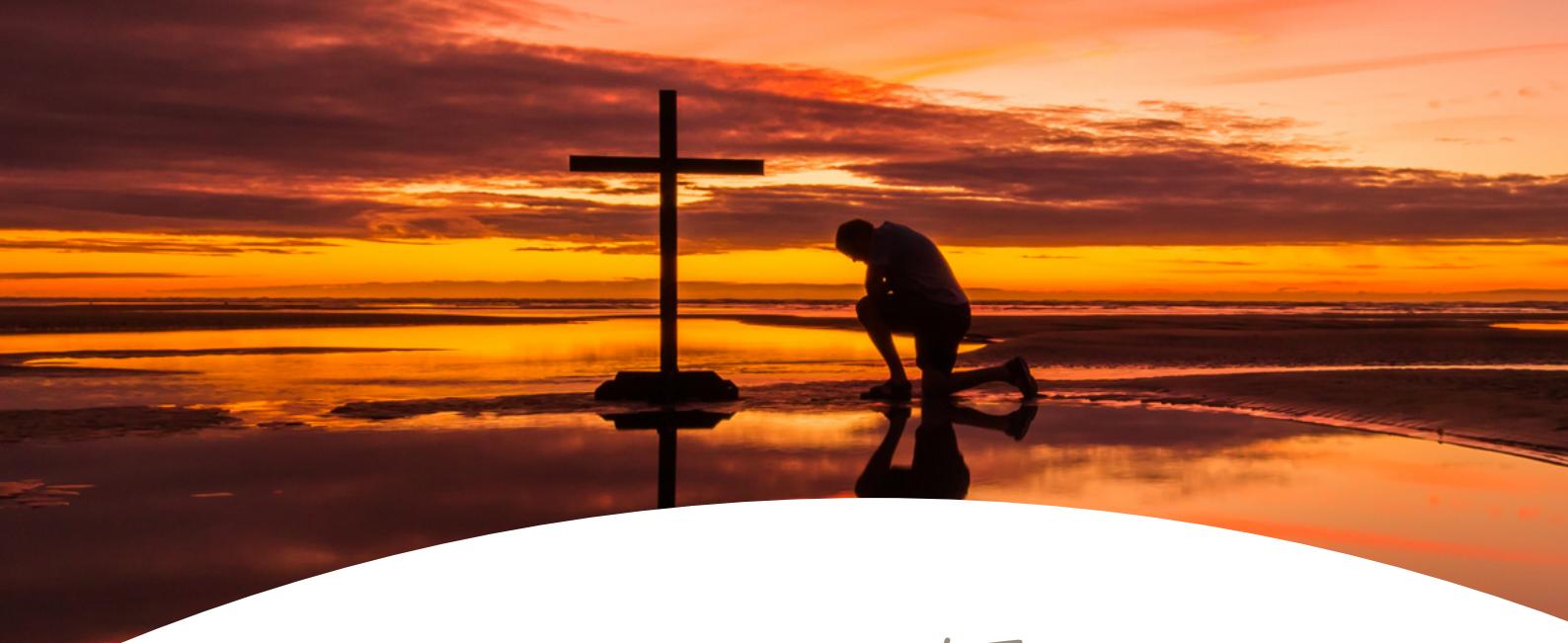
Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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God does indeed have a magnanimous (large-hearted or generous-minded) disposition toward us. Magnanimity is best demonstrated in challenging times. Throughout salvation history, God's commitment to us never wavered. On the contrary, it got stronger the more we wavered and sinned. And in Jesus, God's love was especially shown: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you... I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (John 15:13-15). Thanks to God's passionate commitment to us, we can pin our exuberant hopes on God fulfilling His promise to make us His sons and daughters through His son, Jesus Christ. God's dreams for us are as inexhaustible as are the divine Mysteries. We need to believe that we can do anything in Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). We can have this magnanimous spirit, because of Christ's power given to us by His Holy Spirit.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Discipleship blossoms when our spirit is intrepid and bold because the Holy Spirit is at the helm of our affairs. There is the mistaken notion that in order to enter into a meaningful relationship with God, we need first to be good and upright. The opposite is true. Jesus came precisely for sinners. God asks that we come with hearts and minds that are open and willing to be overwhelmed by God's love and forgiveness. Through the encounter with Jesus, we become good and upright. When we have truly experienced God's love and compassion, we will move toward repentance and discipleship. We will desire to love and serve God and our neighbor with all our hearts and minds and souls, imitating Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Role Model.

In this walk with God, having a large heart and generous spirit is essential. Anyone desiring to enter into a significant relationship with God will have to be prepared to take on the characteristics and dispositions of God Himself: "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5: 48). We always need to have expectant faith! Being magnanimous, on our part, will mean that we truly allow God to be God; we truly trust God to fulfill His promises to us, to make us His sons and daughters, created in His image and likeness, and washed clean in the blood of His son, Jesus Christ.

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