



LEAD ME INTO THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN
FORGIVEN & DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 1

THE METHOD OF MEDITATION

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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:



Being willing to forgive others, no matter what the circumstances might be, is essential to a covenant relationship with God. After He gave us the 'Our Father' Prayer, Jesus insisted on the forgiveness of others: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6: 14-15). Our covenant with God is a family bond. We are inextricably linked to God and one another through Jesus who is our bond with the Blessed Trinity as He is the incarnate Son of God and our Messiah. As God's image and likeness, we are inextricably linked to one another as well. Jesus is the Head and we are His body that Paul describes as the Church: "And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way" (Ephesians 1: 22-23).

As disciples of Jesus, we can only live meaningfully within the family bond established by God with us through His Son Jesus. And living within our family bond with God means that we eschew sin and resolve to live in obedience to God's will and His teachings. Our discipleship will therefore be jeopardized without a strong commitment to forgive others. There are two reasons as to why forgiveness of others lies at the heart of our covenant relationship with God. Jesus forgave us unconditionally through His death and resurrection. He died for us so that the Father could offer us eternal life, to live without sin and to become conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus. We have received God's grace through no merit of our own. And Jesus wants us to be like Him in all our relationships with our fellow humans.



PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Secondly, an equally convincing argument to forgive others is that our own resentment and hatred of others will consume us and ultimately, either restrict our spiritual and psychological well-being, or even destroy it. When we harbor resentment and bitterness in our hearts, we remain in desolation. We are under the influence of the evil spirit and become slaves of our wickedness. We are not living in the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. And in our resentment of others, we become indiscriminate in venting our feelings through gossip and calumny. St. James weighs in on the evils of a nasty tongue in his letter: “No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. This need not be so, my brothers” (James 3: 8-10).

Sadly, there will be times when reconciliation with others will not be possible, even when we are willing to go all the way. However, we can always attempt to forgive others in our hearts even when reconciliation is not possible with them. Jesus asks us to forgive without counting the cost. The important question we will address this week is the following: Am I willing to forgive others, as Jesus asks me? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an unrelenting desire to forgive without ever counting the cost.



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 method of Meditation has been in vogue since the middle ages. Saints Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila used the method themselves and taught it too. Meditation begins with a Preparatory Prayer. We ask God to direct all our intentions, desires, and actions, to the praise and service of God. The Preparatory Prayer sets the context of our relationship with God at the very beginning: we are there on God's terms and we declare our earnest commitment to the Lord. In God's Embrace Ministries, our Preparatory Prayer is our Prayer to the Holy Spirit. We then create the environment for our prayer session. We already know the passage on which we will be praying. We can create whatever image we believe would help to truly engage with the subject matter. For instance, to imagine Jesus being born in a cave if we are praying on the birth of Jesus. From reading the passage, it becomes clear what grace or disposition we would need to follow Jesus' teachings as expressed in the passage.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

So, we ask for that grace before we do a reflection on the passage. When done purposefully and with care, our reflection can stir our hearts deeply. St. Ignatius was adamant about tasting and relishing the truth in the passage. We will be moved to offer Jesus a response. It is important that we express directly to God the stirrings of our hearts engendered by the passage. St. Ignatius insists that at the end of our prayer we express directly to God the stirrings of our hearts. This is known as the colloquy. When meditation is done well, there is a healthy balance between reflection and direct interaction with God. Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

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!



The nightly review of the day is a significant practice in a disciple's formation. The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. 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. We engage in praise and thanksgiving for the blessings and protection we received from God. Today, with thanksgiving in your heart, you can go over your day, from morning to evening, and see how God was Emmanuel, with you and in you. You can then do an examination of your conscience to see how you responded in your covenant union with Him. Did you succumb to temptation and did you commit deliberate sin? As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to humbly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

Listen: 

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 Four: Are you ready to become more of the disciple Jesus intends you to be?

- Consider reading *The Imitation of Christ*, the most influential book after the Bible to form disciples of Christ. We suggest three or four Chapters per week. They are short and to the point.
- In addition to the Morning and Night prayers you have established as a disciple's lifestyle, consider inviting the Blessed Mother to walk with you on this daily journey. Try to pray the rosary or parts of it, daily.
- As you interact with others throughout your day, attempt to place a greater emphasis on listening than on talking.

My Notes

Date :

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

A small wooden boat is positioned in the lower-left foreground, floating on a calm body of water. The sun is setting in the distance, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds. In the background, there are dark, silhouetted mountains. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

LEAD ME INTO THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 2

LOVE OF ENEMIES

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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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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.

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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.

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." - Matthew 5: 44-48

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Chapters 5-7, is the most well-known of Matthew's five discourses. The Sermon on the Mount captures the essence of Jesus' life and teachings. The Sermon on the Mount, therefore, forms the basis of our understanding and appreciation of the Kingdom of God in the New and Everlasting Covenant. In living in the Kingdom of God, we make God the center of our lives. Only God matters for the disciple, and everything else takes on relevance only in relationship to God. The disciple is always at God's beck and call.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is inviting us to an altogether different way of living and acting. He wants us to be like Him in our worldview and actions. To be like Jesus is to be without sin, to act without sin, and to serve everyone as Jesus did. We are to behave as saints in our thoughts and behaviors, even though we struggle with the disorders of sin. We have been washed clean in His blood. In 2Corinthians 5: 21, Paul tells us that the Father “made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”

Because of His death on the cross on our behalf, we now share in the fullness of God’s Trinitarian Life. We are to treat our enemies as if they were saints. In asking us to love our enemies, Jesus is asking us to behave as He did, to have our sinful hearts and dispositions replaced by His covenant love and service of us. Even while we were sworn enemies in our sinfulness, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loved us as ‘friends,’ determined to offer us a share in God’s divine life! Jesus tells us on several occasions that He came not for the just but to answer the needs of sinners. He expresses a special fondness for sinners and seeks their company. While He knows of our human condition better than we do, especially our penchant for sabotaging the good within us, He knows beyond any shadow of a doubt, that sinners, such as ourselves, have been called to profound transformation through the Holy Spirit.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

The purpose of His mission, then, is to bring us salvation and union with God, to think, act, and be like Him. We are to treat enemies as friends. Like Jesus we are called to be forgiving, compassionate, and generous in our service of others: “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This transformation will take place through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When we treat others the way Jesus treated us, the Kingdom of God will be present in our hearts and among us. The Holy Spirit will use our witness to both convict and convince the world that Jesus is Savior and Lord! Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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Forgiveness is an essential component of the nightly review of the day. Receiving God's forgiveness of our sins reminds us that Jesus is God's Mercy Incarnate. If we are truly repentant, we will always be assured of God's forgiveness. Forgiveness of our sins is dependent on our forgiveness of others: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6: 14-15). In our morning Face to Face, Jesus expects forgiveness and love of our enemies and those who hate us to become our lifestyle. Jesus wants us to be like Him in our worldview and actions. To be like Jesus is to be without sin, to act without sin, and to serve everyone as Jesus did. During your examination of conscience, pay special attention to your experience of forgiveness. Along with gratitude, you might realize that you have work to do in forgiving yourself and others. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



LEAD ME INTO
THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 3

JUDGING OTHERS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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

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.

“Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.” - Matthew 7: 1-2

Servanthood is the basis of the Sermon on the Mount. Servanthood holds the other as more significant than self. Servanthood is the most beautiful expression of covenant union. Love, to be genuine, must be expressed in deeds rather than in words. The Golden Rule of life is to “do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7: 12). Our neighbors are the image and likeness of God. We cannot say we have a meaningful relationship with God, the Original, if we don't treat the image and likeness as God would!



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

In creating us in His image and likeness, God established a permanent bond with us. Even with the advent of sin, this bond with us would remain unbreakable. In His infinite mercy and love, God sent us His Son to be our Savior and Lord. Through Jesus this bond remains unbroken. We have been restored as God's image and likeness in Jesus. Through Jesus, we have become God's covenant family. We celebrate and participate in God's divine life through the Eucharist and the sacraments. Jesus wants us to celebrate the divine life amidst His covenant family because of this intimate and unbreakable bond between the Blessed Trinity and us. We cannot therefore be in union with God and condemning of one another. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In all His teachings, He is moving us toward the truth that He is the Head and we are His body. We adhere to the truth when we try not to be hypocritical in our relationships with others. We are clearly hypocritical when we judge and condemn others about behaviors of which we ourselves are guilty. In doing so, we condemn ourselves. Living in repentance and forgiving others is the right approach to discipleship. We can only say we love Jesus when we treat others as we would Jesus. Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

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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There is an intimate connection between our morning Face to Face with God and our nightly review of the day. Pondering the word of God during our morning prayer increases our awareness of how profoundly our lives have been intertwined with God's love for us. The word of God also acts as a challenge to us, exposing our sin and inviting us to return to an honest and transparent relationship with God. This morning we saw that in creating us in His image and likeness, God established a permanent bond with us. Through Jesus, this bond remains unbroken. We have been restored as God's image and likeness through Jesus. Jesus wants us to celebrate the divine life amidst His covenant family because of this intimate and unbreakable bond between the Blessed Trinity and us. We cannot therefore be in union with God and condemning of one another. We are clearly hypocritical when we judge and condemn others about behaviors of which we ourselves are guilty. In doing so we condemn ourselves. Living in repentance and forgiving others is the right approach to discipleship. We truly love Jesus when we treat others as we would Jesus. We truly love Jesus when we love others as Jesus did. As you examine your conscience, you can remind yourself that your love of others is the measure of your love of God. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

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Examination of CONSCIENCE

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My Notes

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LEAD ME INTO THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 4

TEACHING ABOUT RETALIATION

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands in prayer with a rosary.

Morning PRAYER

Listen:



Act of Faith

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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.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well." - Matthew 5: 38-39

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets represented the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant was a stepping-stone toward the New and Eternal Covenant that Jesus would establish through His death on the cross. The grace of the Mosaic Covenant would be replaced by the grace of the New and Eternal Covenant in Jesus: "From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1: 16-17). When reading the Old Testament from the New Testament perspective, one sees clearly how God, through His prophets, provided innumerable signs pointing to Jesus as the Savior of the world. This Jesus would be the Son of God. He would be our Suffering Servant by whose stripes we would be healed. This Jesus would fulfill the Law and the Prophets, emphasizing God's eternal truths revealed in them as well as going beyond them and revealing through Himself, the fullness of God's love and life.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

In our passage, taken from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us the fullness of His teaching on love of neighbor. We are to go beyond an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, the yardstick for justice in the Mosaic Covenant. Jesus tells us, “When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well.” When the disciple offers the other cheek as an expression of unremitting love and forgiveness, on the surface, Jesus’ teaching seems weak and unrealistic. Paradoxically, however, the gesture of the other cheek being offered in unremitting love and forgiveness supersedes by far the aggressor’s imprisonment in hate and bitterness. Anyone who does as Jesus says and did, will unleash the power of a revolution, as no power on earth can withstand the power of love, expressed in compassion and unflinching adherence to the truth. Offering no resistance to one who is evil means we will stand with Jesus for His truth, and take whatever consequences come to us. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about such a transformation in us. Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

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!



The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. We are assessing our commitment to Jesus as His disciple. God demonstrated His immense love for us when He made the decision to send us His Son to be our Savior and ensure our participation in His Divine Life! In covenant union with God we experience God's total gift of Himself to us, and our surrender to Him becomes our heart's desire. In our morning Face to Face, we saw that Jesus gave us the fullness of His teaching on love of neighbor. We are to go beyond an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and offer no resistance to one who is evil. Anyone who does as Jesus says and did, will unleash the power of a revolution, as no power on earth can withstand the power of love, expressed in compassion and unflinching adherence to the truth. Offering no resistance to one who is evil means we will stand with Jesus for His truth, and take whatever consequences come to us. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about such a transformation in us. In your examination of conscience, along with reviewing your failures to respond generously as a disciple, you can reflect on the place resentment and revenge have in your heart. When you are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

Listen:



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 Four: Are you ready to become more of the disciple Jesus intends you to be?

- Consider reading *The Imitation of Christ*, the most influential book after the Bible to form disciples of Christ. We suggest three or four Chapters per week. They are short and to the point.
- In addition to the Morning and Night prayers you have established as a disciple's lifestyle, consider inviting the Blessed Mother to walk with you on this daily journey. Try to pray the rosary or parts of it, daily.
- As you interact with others throughout your day, attempt to place a greater emphasis on listening than on talking.

My Notes

Date :

[illegible]

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



*LEAD ME INTO
THE DEEP, LORD*

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 5

FORGIVING OTHERS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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.

"If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." - Matthew 6: 14-15

In Jesus' New and Everlasting Covenant, the Lord's Prayer captures the essence of the covenant union between God and His covenant family. The Lord's Prayer is a prominent part of the Sermon on the Mount. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we are entering into the spirit of Jesus as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount. A prominent characteristic of Jesus that is very moving for us is His enduring mercy. Jesus is God's mercy incarnate. It makes sense, therefore, that Jesus would require us to forgive others if we are to receive forgiveness from God.

As if to highlight the necessity of being merciful, immediately after He taught His disciples the 'Our Father,' Jesus provides us this promise and admonition: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." Just as the Ten Commandments could be viewed as the betrothal statement of the Mosaic Covenant, in the same way, the Lord's Prayer expresses the very essence of the New and Eternal Covenant established by Jesus on the Cross.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

Through our Lamb that was slain, we have become sons and daughters of Jesus' Father who is now Our Father. In claiming God as Father, we have received the fullness of our inheritance in Jesus. God has become Emmanuel, abiding among us and in us. And it is our intense desire to reciprocate by offering ourselves to God wholeheartedly and generously.

The Lord's Prayer, then, is our betrothal statement. In becoming one with God, we have become one with His covenant family. We have no choice, therefore, but to treat them as God does because we are in covenant with God and His family. In God's eyes, we cannot say that we love Him if we do not love others the way He loves them. The litmus test of love is when we are prepared to forgive others their transgressions, and not be motivated by hurt and resentment in our attitude and behavior toward them. Such a disposition can be described as loving unconditionally. Jesus will make this happen through His Holy Spirit. Hence in the Lord's Prayer, we ask to receive Jesus as our daily bread in communion, through whom the impossible will be made possible. Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

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!



Forgiveness is an essential component of the nightly review of the day. Receiving God's forgiveness of our sins reminds us that Jesus is God's Mercy Incarnate. If we are truly repentant, we will always be assured of God's forgiveness. Forgiveness of our sins is dependent on our forgiveness of others. We were made aware of this necessary connection in our Face to Face this morning: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6: 14-15). Forgiveness of self is also crucial to the proper development of discipleship. It is not uncommon for someone to believe that God has forgiven them but have difficulty forgiving themselves. Our nightly review can help us address the dichotomy between God's forgiveness of our sins, and our own inability or unwillingness to forgive ourselves. Our nightly review also will help us determine the seriousness of our desire to receive forgiveness of our sins from God by our intent to forgive others who have harmed us. Lastly, when we experience true forgiveness, then we are filled with gratitude and joy. Forgiving others as we have been forgiven by God leads us to experience covenant union with God. During your examination of conscience, pay special attention to your experience of forgiveness, both of yourself, and of others by you. Along with gratitude, you might realize that you have work to do in forgiving yourself and others. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

Listen:



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

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- As you interact with others throughout your day, attempt to place a greater emphasis on listening than on talking.

My Notes

Date : _____

[illegible]

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



LEAD ME INTO THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 6

HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD WE FORGIVE?

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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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Morning Offering

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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.

"Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." - Matthew 18: 21-22

Matthew offers the teachings of Jesus in five discourses, the first one being the Sermon on the Mount. The fourth discourse, Matthew 18: 3-35, is known as the 'church order' discourse. The emphasis is not so much on the structure of the church, than on the pastoral care that the disciples must have for one another in the life of the believing community: to help guard and protect one another's faith in Jesus (Matthew 18: 6-7); to search and find those who had strayed from the flock (Matthew 18: 10-14); to embrace the obligation to correct and admonish the erring members of the community, and even separating them from membership should they refuse to be corrected (Matthew 18: 15-18); and finally, to forgive one another with enduring mercy, without ever counting the cost (Matthew 18: 21-35).



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

Our passage for prayer is taken from the last segment of the fourth discourse in Matthew's gospel. Peter approaches Jesus with the following question: "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" From the Jewish perspective, Peter is being very generous toward his brother who has sinned against him. He is willing to forgive as many as seven times. He has gone far beyond the demands of justice: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. He has been listening to Jesus' teachings and is experiencing a big change in his outlook. From his perspective, Peter believed he had made a big change in his life and was being a faithful and true disciple of Jesus.

Jesus' answer was totally unexpected and must have burst Peter's bubble: "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." Jesus is emphasizing the fact that our forgiveness of others is to be without limit. Like God's mercy toward us, our mercy toward others is to be enduring, without limits. Jesus then illustrates limitless forgiveness with the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant that follows. The Unforgiving servant owed a large debt, literally, ten thousand talents, humanly impossible to pay back, which is our debt to God which Jesus paid through His death on the cross. By contrast, the debt of the second servant to the first one was small, three hundred denarii, the kind of debt human beings owe one another through their sinfulness.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

As on other occasions, Jesus highlights the truth that His Heavenly Father will not forgive anyone who chooses to be unforgiving like the unmerciful servant in the Parable. Jesus applies to us the same yardstick for forgiveness that He has for Himself. He did not choose to condemn us to eternal separation from God. Rather, He laid down His life for us so that we could be freed from sin and share in the fullness of His Divine Life. In like manner, we are to forgive others their trespasses against us. Lord Jesus, give me a compassionate and forgiving heart!

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!



Once again, forgiveness is the theme of our morning Face to Face visit with God. In our experience of forgiving others, we might have experienced much difficulty. However, when we asked and received God's grace to forgive those who hate us or whom we hate, we experienced much peace, gratitude, and inner freedom. Such a state of soul is the result of God's love permeating our hearts. What is sometimes not emphasized enough, is that forgiveness of others is a daily affair. Even though we have forgiven our enemies, the roots of sin, in the form of resentment, anger, and hurt, continue to reside in us. In His response to Peter who asked how often he should forgive his brother, Jesus said that our forgiveness of others is to be without limit. Jesus applies to us the same yardstick for forgiveness that He has for Himself. He chose not to condemn us to eternal separation from God. Rather, He laid down His life for us so that we could be freed from sin and share in the fullness of His Divine Life. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to humbly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?

Listen:



Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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The Act of Contrition

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Encouragement for the Journey

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- As you interact with others throughout your day, attempt to place a greater emphasis on listening than on talking.

My Notes

Date : _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



LEAD ME INTO THE DEEP, LORD

REVELATION 4: HAVE YOU BEEN FORGIVEN
& DO YOU FORGIVE OTHERS?
WEEK 1, DAY 7

DEALING WITH TEMPTATIONS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

A lit candle in a metal holder and hands clasped in prayer with a rosary.

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.

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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 best way to avoid serious sin is to be constantly alert to avoid every deliberate sin. Being lax in the matter of venial sin is a recipe for making ourselves vulnerable to commit serious sin! If we do not resist the small temptations immediately, we will fall prey to serious temptations. As the wisdom of Alcoholics Anonymous would suggest, you cannot afford to entertain a temptation for more than five seconds, because by then you will have become too vulnerable and will capitulate! Do not dialogue with the temptation, but perform some contrary act of virtue, like praying for your enemy, engaging in acts of gratitude, or doing some good deed immediately. Bring the temptation out into the light, especially if it is of an addictive nature. Temptations only get stronger when they are permitted to grow in secrecy. Expose them and they lose their vigor. Talking about our temptations to our confessor in the sacrament of reconciliation, or to a wise mentor, is an excellent way of being accountable.



FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

Our habits of sin can be our vulnerability. Even after we have repented, we still retain our affection for these sinful habits which we keep alive in our memory and imagination through regret about all the sacrifices we have to make, through nostalgia about the good old times we had when we were gambling, drinking, etc. Our purification from deliberate venial sin will not happen unless mortal sin is rejected and affection for sin is tackled assertively. A daily practice of prayer, spiritual reading, the Examination of Conscience, and formation in spiritual practices is essential to tackling our affection for sin. Asking Mary and the saints to intercede for us is an effective way of guarding our discipleship against temptation. Lord Jesus, give me a clean and transparent heart!

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!



In our morning Face to Face with God we pondered on the presence of temptation in our lives, and the best way to avoid sin is to be constantly alert to avoid every deliberate sin. If we don't resist the small temptations immediately, we will fall prey to serious temptations. Temptations only get stronger when they are permitted to grow in secrecy. Our habits of sin can be our vulnerability. Even after we have repented, we still retain our affection for these sinful habits which we keep alive in our memory and imagination through regret about all the sacrifices we have to make, through nostalgia about the good old times we had when we were gambling, drinking, etc. Our purification from deliberate venial sin will not happen unless mortal sin is rejected, and affection for sin is tackled assertively. The nightly review of the day is a significant practice to tackle our affection for sin. With thanksgiving in your heart, you can go over your day and see how God was Emmanuel, with you and in you. You can then do an examination of your conscience to see how you responded in your covenant union with Him, especially in the way you handled temptation. Did you succumb to temptation and did you commit deliberate sin? As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the 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 discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?



Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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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 Four: Are you ready to become more of the disciple Jesus intends you to be?

- Consider reading *The Imitation of Christ*, the most influential book after the Bible to form disciples of Christ. We suggest three or four Chapters per week. They are short and to the point.
- In addition to the Morning and Night prayers you have established as a disciple's lifestyle, consider inviting the Blessed Mother to walk with you on this daily journey. Try to pray the rosary or parts of it, daily.
- As you interact with others throughout your day, attempt to place a greater emphasis on listening than on talking.

My Notes

Date :

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?