

Choosing Small Sacrifices.

The possibilities are huge to find small sacrifices that no one else will know about except our Father God who sees in secret and will repay us in secret grace and charity for our happiness.

Exterior Sacrifices of the Senses

Sacrifices in Food:

No eating between meals;
Eating less or fasting some;
Eating less of what we like more, eating more of what we like less; skipping a condiment such as salt, sugar, ketchup, cream;
Delaying eating of an item that is appetizing;
Delay drinking the beverage; Skipping use of ice in drinks;
Taking the least appetizing portion offered on a tray;
Not getting exactly all I want off the menu, even if I am on expense account or others are paying for it;

Sacrifices in Sleep:

Skipping naps; Getting up on time, at a set time;
Going to bed on time, at a set time;
Getting up at the same time, even if you got in late;
Avoiding assiduously, tv watching when not sleepy;
Reading a pious book, or praying the rosary if not sleepy;

Sacrifices in Posture and Carriage:

Taking the stairs more; Not crossing legs; sitting up straight;
Taking the less comfortable seat for a car ride;
Not leaning back in your chair, or not using the backrest;
Kindly smiling at people, especially those whom you find boring;

Sacrifices in Hygiene:

Taking cooler shower; Taking a shorter shower;
Flossing, brushing after meals; Keeping mirror use to a minimum;
Offering the bathroom use to others before us;
Wiping out the hairs out of the drain showering;
Rinsing the sink well to make it attractive the next user;
Putting out a new tp roll when the current one is running low;
Folding hand towels and putting them back attractively after use;

Sacrifices in Amusements:

Limiting listening to music; Reading more, especially classics;
Setting TV usage or skipping it altogether;
Helping a sibling, spouse with chores & homework instead of TV;
Watching a movie or show with someone else, => that they like;
Curbing video game usage;
Never doing amusements before studies and chores are complete; Playing the sport that the others want to play;
Using books on tape; limiting radio in the car;

Sacrifices in Knowledge:

dropping/cutting back drastically any "instant messenger" usage;
Limiting my checking and usage of e-mail;
Avoiding using the internet without clear, useful purpose;
Eliminating internet surfing;
Budgeting Facebook time; Avoiding Twitter!
Reading only set parts of the newspaper;
Not looking at billboards, into shop windows; not price shopping;
Bringing good topics to talk about to meetings of my friends so I avoid gossip and backbiting.
Limiting the following of sports scores, standings, playoff races;
Care to not overdose on checking the news; (choose internet or paper, but not both)
Not looking into cars as you drive, to "see who's in there";

Sacrifices in Social Environments / Curiosity:

Letting others tell jokes that you already know, without comment (and with laughing);
Asking shy people to tell a funny story or interesting experience they could relate;
Looking at others and waiting till they finish (better listening)
Taking the less favored seat;
Consulting your spouse, and letting MANY things go as they think without comment (prudential judgment on minor matters);
Complimenting more your spouse, co-workers, children; at meals;
Consulting with your spouse on purchases;
Recalling the special dates / anniversaries of spouse's relatives;
Standing up when someone of similar or higher social standing comes into the room;
Dropping what we are doing to address people when they come;
Avoiding shopping without a list, no wandering with a credit card
If all the priorities are the same, doing the hardest task first;
Writing more letters to relatives or friends, and thank you notes;

Praising your spouse in front of children, friends, colleagues...;
Thanking your spouse, siblings, parents more often;

Sacrifices in Vehicle Use:

Leaving earlier i.e., giving more time to get there;
More care in following speed limits; Looking to let people in

Sacrifices in Phone Use

moving to a private place to answer calls; care on trains and busses and in restaurants, etc.;;
Ask for the grace of the moment to discern if some calls should go to voice mail;
Get back to people promptly, even those who are difficult;
Using a cheerful tone of voice on the phone;

Sacrifices in Work

Using a to-do list every day;
Finishing what has been started before another thing, (most especially if we are finding ourselves with many tasks undone; inefficient? *Maybe...*);
Putting a reminder for Presence of God at our desk;
Making a log of experiences in tasks so that we and / or the next person can do that task without re-invention;
Keeping order among our papers a little each day;
Looking to include others in the praise and recognition in jobs;

Points from St. Josemaría:

Many who would willingly let themselves be nailed to a Cross before the astonished gaze of a thousand onlookers cannot bear with a Christian spirit the pinpricks of each day! Think, then, which is the more heroic?

*Prayer: humility of the man who acknowledges his profound wretchedness and the greatness of God. He addresses and adores God as one who expects everything from Him and nothing from himself.

*Faith: humility of the mind which renounces its own judgment and surrenders to the verdict and authority of the Church.

*Obedience: humility of the will which subjects itself to the will of another, for God's sake.

*Chastity: humility of the flesh, which subjects itself to the spirit.

*Exterior mortification: the humility of the senses.

*Penance: humility of all the passions, immolated to the Lord.

*Humility is truth on the road of the ascetic struggle.

Sacrifices in the Interior Faculties

The sacrifices of the interior faculties are more important, & often times more difficult to put into practice. They presuppose an active understanding & use of the exterior sacrifices. The interior faculties include the imagination, the memory, the understanding & the will. Each needs sacrifice and purification. In addition these faculties need to be served with good thoughts, pushed & maintained by grace, grasped in prayer.

Sacrifices of the Imagination

Prologue: A loose imagination weakens our will power, but a good one can help in our mental prayer; It can be the “crazy lady of the house”;

Do I fight the temptation of “*Living in the Subjunctive*”: what might’ve been, could’ve been, should’ve been, still might be..., what ought to be, if I had my way, if I were in charge?

Do I fight useless daydreams of the “Walter Mitty” type; and wishful thinking: if only I had another job, another school, different physical characteristics or gifts, lived in another place...;

Do I give into thoughts, ‘who would I marry if my spouse died?’
Could I use the “chime” on my watch to ring the hour to awake me to my duties of state?

Do I use the to do list, with prayer intentions for each task, to keep me “on task”, and away from fritting away time, which is God’s?

Do I break down larger jobs into smaller manageable parts so as to not lose heart?

Do I give in to worry about my health, finances, job, etc?

Sacrifices of the Memory

Prologue: Truth is not always helpful, and with our memory we may not have all the truth, just what is left of how we saw it, perhaps even with our sincere additions and emphases.

Not spinning on things, swatting away unhelpful memories;
Seeking to fight hurtful or prideful memories;

Making time to pray in front of the tabernacle only, for the most difficult memories;

Sacrifices of the Understanding

Am I overly attached to my personal opinion?

Do I form strong opinions on very little knowledge, or from information and notions that need renewal by study?

Detecting ongoing judgments when we fall into this “attitude”;

Making time for study every day;

Do I constantly correct the others?

Do I yield judgment or correction, when I can see that charity does not call for it?

Do I leave space for other people’s opinion?

Sacrifices of the Will

Prologue: We see the obedience to God’s Will and His will in others.

Seeking Spiritual direction and confession; set time & frequency;

Deferring to spouse, (after praying about the matter);

Consulting readings with others of prudence;

Checking movies before watching

(www.screenit.com/index1.html) ;

Asking permission first instead of pardon afterwards (we might hear ‘no!’ and this is a humbling position): *-taking shampoo or toiletries without asking, ‘borrowing’ roommates or siblings food or clothes without asking; asking for money instead of ‘borrowing’;*

Fighting the spinning on things, (advertisements, material things) that can strengthen and make me compulsive;

Exercising as the doctor says I should;

Sacrifices in Emotions, Moods, & Feelings

Fighting moods; seeking presence of God and sense of divine filiation;

Physically smiling, even when I do not feel like it;

Not showing all my moods on my face, (while speaking to spouse or friends as needed to be listened to and consoled at the right time);

Praying even when I do not feel like it;

Praying to fight resentments as they might start;

Fighting melancholy moods or moods or self pity with a lot of energy;

Sacrifices of the Ear and Tongue

Fighting the tendency to exaggerate or use hyperbolic language;

Fighting the tendency to want to get the best joke in or the last word;

Listening, even seeking to go listen to people we find boring;

Thanking service personnel: waiters and waitresses, flight attendants and baggage handlers, parking lot attendants, etc.;

Asking opinions of the others first before giving ours;

Letting others finish their sentences and paragraphs without interrupting them;

Fighting the tendency to change the topic of conversation unnecessarily;

Admitting when I am wrong (about content or about mode);

Admitting and saying: ‘I don’t know’;

Being careful to not make overly strong remarks about an opinion that limit the freedom of others to express themselves;

Taking care not to complain when I do not have things I need;

Catching myself when I am boasting or tending toward this;

Trying to keep self-referential conversation to a minimum, and more about the others;

Coming into a conversation late, fighting the desire to have others drop everything and bring us completely up to date;

More Points from St. Josemaría:

FW 467 Mortification is the drawbridge that enables us to enter the castle of prayer.

TW 173 That joke, that witty remark held on the tip of your tongue; the cheerful smile for those who annoy you; that silence when you’re unjustly accused; your friendly conversation with people whom you find boring and tactless; the daily effort to overlook one irritating detail or another in the persons who live with you... this, with perseverance, is indeed solid interior mortification.

FW 135 *If your imagination bubbles over with thoughts about yourself and creates fanciful situations and circumstances which would not normally find a place in your way, then these will foolishly distract you. They will dampen your ardor and separate you from the presence of God. This is vanity.

*If your imagination revolves around others, you will easily fall into the defect of passing judgment when this is not your responsibility. You will interpret their behavior not at all objectively but in a mean way. This is rash judgment.

*If your imagination concerns itself with your own talents and ways of speaking, or with the general admiration that you inspire in others, then you will be in danger of losing your rectitude of intention, and of providing fodder for your pride.

*Generally, letting your imagination loose is a waste of time, and, if it is not controlled, it opens the door to a whole string of voluntary temptations.

*Do not leave off the practice of interior mortification for even a single day!