

## TOWARDS HOLINESS

*“In order to bring peace, genuine peace, to souls; in order to transform the earth and to seek God Our Lord in the world and through the things of the world, personal sanctity is indispensable. (...)*

*“There is only one way to become more familiar with God, to increase our trust in him. We must come to know him through prayer; we must speak to him and show him, through a heart to heart conversation, that we love him.”*

St. Josemaria Escriva *Friends of God*, no. 294-316

### St. Josemaria and the Plan of Life

*“When we examine how our piety is and what it should be like, that is what specific points of our personal relationship with God need improving, if you have understood me right you will reject the temptation of imagining fantastic feats, because you will have discovered that Our Lord is quite happy if we offer him little tokens of love any moment of the day.*

*“Try to commit yourself to a plan of life and to keep to it: a few minutes of mental prayer, Holy Mass — daily, if you can manage it — and frequent Communion; regular recourse to the Holy Sacrament of Forgiveness — even though your conscience does not accuse you of mortal sin; visiting Jesus in the Tabernacle; praying and contemplating the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, and so many other marvelous devotions you know or can learn.*

*“You should not let them become rigid rules, or water-tight compartments. They should be flexible, to help you on your journey you who live in the middle of the world, with a life of hard professional work and social ties and obligations which you should not neglect, because in them your conversation with God still continues. Your plan of life ought to be like a rubber glove which fits the hand perfectly.”*

St. Josemaria Escriva

*Friends of God*, no. 149

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### Spiritual Game Plan

Do you want to be a good Christian? The first of your battles will be to enter into and remain in the state of grace, to avoid any mortal sin. And, then, because you want to love God above all things, you will also try not to commit venial sins.

The practice of some acts of piety throughout the day will help you to have a divine contemplative life in the midst of the daily routine. The habitual performance of these acts will also be the foundation for growing in Christian virtues. Most important is to be consistent in your daily schedule, in your spiritual game plan, so that you will live as a child of God.

## DAILY

- Get up at a fixed time, as early as possible. Eight hours of sleep should be enough. More than this or less than six hours of sleep is usually not healthy.
- Offer your day to God through the intercession of our Lady.
- Work with order and intensity during the day as a way of serving God. Set goals and establish priorities in order to develop a practical schedule. Sanctifying ordinary work is the goal of our life.
- Try to attend Mass, receiving Holy Communion, as often as possible. This is the best sacrifice we can offer to God. Prepare yourself for Mass by spending some time in prayer.
- Spend some time in mental prayer before the Blessed Sacrament (15 minutes, if possible).
- Pray the Angelus. Traditionally, the Angelus is prayed at sunrise (6:00 a.m.), noon, and sunset (6:00 p.m. ). (During Easter Time, say the Regina Cæli instead.)
- Pray the Rosary, if possible, with your family, offering each decade for a specific intention.
- Do some other spiritual reading. Start with the New Testament or some well-known spiritual book. Ten to fifteen minutes is sufficient.
- Make a short examination of conscience at the end of the day before going to bed. Two or three minutes is enough. Follow these steps: Humble yourself in the presence of God. Tell him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." Ask for light to acknowledge your defects and virtues and to see the dangers and opportunities of the day. Ask for repentance, amendment, and encouragement.

## WEEKLY

- Center all activities around the Holy Mass on Sunday, the Lord's Day. It is also a family day — for rest and spiritual growth.
- If you do not receive Holy Communion every day, receive at least on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Saturday is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Honor her and say some special prayer, such as the Hail Holy Queen.

## MONTHLY

- Go to Confession at least once a month. It is the sacrament of joy. Pope John Paul II says: "God is always the one who is principally offended by sin — 'I have sinned against You' — and God alone can forgive. He does so through the ministry of the priest in the Sacrament of Penance, which is the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness and remission of mortal sins. Every mortal sin must always be stated with its determining circumstances in an individual confession."
- Seek and follow the spiritual guidance of a wise, prudent, and knowledgeable priest.
- Spend a few hours in recollection, best done before the Blessed Sacrament. Consider how you are directing your life toward God.

## YEARLY

- Spend two or three days each year in silence, speaking with God only. A few days of retreat are necessary for the soul in the same way that the body needs a vacation. It is a yearly opportunity for conversion.

## ALWAYS

- Stay in the presence of God: be aware that he is always close to you. Try to please him in everything as a child tries to please his/her parents.
- Thank God for the graces that he constantly gives you.
- Do everything for the love of God: this is purity of intention. Always purify your intention. Make acts of contrition and atonement for your sins and sins of others.
- Try to live as you would like to die. We shall die as we have lived.

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR PLAN OF LIFE

- Handbook of Prayers (available in English, Spanish and Student Edition)
- Short Guide for Confession (Booklet)
- Praying the Rosary with St. Josemaria Esciva
- A Plan of Life by Joseph Muntadas (Scepter Booklet)