

# HOURS OF ENCOUNTER

St. John the Baptist  
Confirmation Year 2





If you wish, begin with this prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ,

I believe that You are really here in this Sacrament.

I thank You, Jesus my Divine Redeemer for coming upon the earth for my sake

and for instituting the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in order to remain with us until the end of the world.

I lay before you right now all my doubts and discouragements.

I lay before you every burden and stress that I am feeling.

I lay before you my thoughts, feelings, and desires.

I trust You, Jesus, to take care of every detail of my life.

Give me the freedom to gaze upon You, sit with You, learn from You, and most importantly, to love You deeper.

Amen.

# 5 WAYS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN ADORATION

Taken from *A Beginners Guide to Adoration* by Caitlin Sica, writer for Lifeteen

Have you ever gone to adoration? Have you tried, but felt defeated like I first did, and occasionally still do? Here's a list of 5 ways to be successful in adoration:

## 1. BE PATIENT

I was recently talking with a group of friends about their experiences of adoration. A lot of them expressed the same frustration—that sometimes, time seems to stand still, 5 minutes seem eternal. Have you ever been out of shape and tried to go for a one mile run. Suddenly, 5 minutes into the run, you're huffing and puffing and you realize you've only gone one block. Rather than focusing on the success — you just ran for the first time in months!! — we tend to focus on the defeat. Adoration can be a bit of a work out... for your soul. So set yourself up for success. If it's been awhile, or your first time, 5 minutes of sitting with Jesus is a good goal. Slowly increase your time—you'll be amazed at how God increases your capacity to be with Him!

## 2. BRING SCRIPTURE

Reading scripture is always a good thing, but is especially helpful and meditative during adoration. There are many prayer books and apps that contain daily scripture readings. I particularly like reading the Psalms and reflecting on a verse that speaks to me on that given day. As I read scripture I ask myself: How is this scripture speaking to my heart? What changes is God asking me to take? How will I go about making those changes? I make this part of my prayer.

## 3. PRAY THE ROSARY

The rosary is a beautiful prayer, one that many saints have prayed. St. Louis de Montfort said “When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer.” What better way to give Jesus and Mary glory than to pray the rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament? There are many guides and apps you can print/download to help guide you through this form of prayer.

## 4. LISTEN TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP MUSIC

When I'm the only one in the Church or chapel, I love to start adoration by listening to praise and worship music. “Restless” and “I Shall Not Want” by Audrey Assad, “Lay it Down” and “Lord, I Need You” by Matt Maher, are just a few of my favorite songs to listen to during adoration. The music and the lyrics help me quiet myself and turn my thoughts to God.

## 5. BE OKAY WITH SILENCE

It's so easy to go a whole day without silence. We get in the car and turn on the radio, we have our phones, with days worth of music, in our pockets, and at the end of the day there's Netflix. Even if we are in a quiet environment, we are usually accustomed to checking our phones—for a text, the latest Facebook drama, the trending hashtag on Twitter, the newest picture on Instagram, the list goes on.

Don't get me wrong, I fall prey to every one of those habits. Which is why, when I'm sitting in adoration, I can find it difficult to focus. I've become so accustomed to the business of the world, that being truly still, truly silent, can seem uncomfortable, foreign. But that discomfort is ok, good even. In Audrey Assad's “Restless” she sings “And I'm restless, I'm restless, ‘Til I rest in You.” I find this sentiment to be so true when I am in adoration. Sure, the first few minutes I am restless as I begin to wind down. But eventually, I am filled with insurmountable peace. Allow yourself to sit in silence and to just be with Jesus.

In an apparition to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Jesus spoke these beautiful words: "I have a burning thirst to be honored by men in the Blessed Sacrament." Go to adoration, even if it's just for 5 minutes. Jesus desires to be with you, to have you gaze upon Him, as He so lovingly gazes upon you.

# THE EXAMEN PRAYER

Taken from Fuller Youth Initiative

St. Ignatius practiced the Examen twice daily. This simple, 5-step guide can take only 10-30 minutes, yet produces rich intimacy with God who is the Giver of Life and Author of Truth. This rich intimacy is something that you can experience by doing the Examen on your own. When you practice the Examen, something extraordinary shifts in your soul and service: “The abundant life Jesus promised comes when we know ourselves and serve others from the truest parts of who we are.” [[Mindy Caliguire, *Soul Searching* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 8.]] So, how can we experience more of Jesus’ abundant life through the Examen? Follow these 5 steps:

## 1. Recall you are in the presence of God.

“I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence...you are there.” Psalm 139:7,8, NLT

The first step of the Examen reminds us of a foundational truth: God has never left us; we just forget God is there. Stop for a few minutes and remember God’s presence around you, in your circumstances, and acknowledge the Holy Spirit’s work within you. Before you move on, write down any thoughts, feelings, or observations as you reconnect to God’s presence.

## 2. Look at your day with gratitude.

“Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.” Psalm 139:14, NLT

Most of the time it’s easier to remember what is not going right, what we don’t have, who’s not “for” us, and how we have let God down. This step in the review is a reminder to pull our eyes off what is not to remember who is. You can spend as long as necessary on this step, simply raising your eyes and hearts to the God who has blessed you beyond measure. The point of this step is to shift the focus off yourself as the false center of the universe and redirect your heart toward the true God of the Universe.

## 3. Ask for help from the Holy Spirit.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” Psalm 139:23, NLT

While this step may only take a minute, it is critical for us to intentionally invite the Holy Spirit to guide this time. Too often our own voices and vices guide our thoughts and decisions. This vital step orients our spirit toward the Spirit of light and truth. It acknowledges our dependence on God to instruct, guide, correct, and speak to us.

## 4. Review your day.

“How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!” Psalm 139:17, NLT

“Test yourselves to see whether you are living in faith; examine yourselves. Perhaps you yourselves do not realize that Christ Jesus is in you.” 2 Corinthians 13:5, NASB

This is the portion of the review that will take the most time. Approach this step like you are watching a movie of your day. Scene by scene, hour by hour reflect on the truth and reality of your day. Remember the sights, sounds, smells, conversations, internal thoughts, and intimate feelings of the moments from your day. The Examen offers questions to discern your actions and awareness of God throughout your day. [[ Mindy Caliguire, *Soul Searching* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 48.]]

- What were the highs—what was most life-giving?
- What were the lows—what was most life-depleting?
- When did I fail?
- When did I love?
- Do I observe any habits or life patterns?
- When did I see evidence of God’s presence?

Remember to review your day by listening to the whispers of truth and love from the Spirit.

## 5. Reconcile and resolve.

“Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:24, NLT

This final step brings closure to the Examen through focusing on the future. It points us to course correction, righting wrongs, and a fresh start. It points us back to the abundant life Jesus came to offer. And this step reminds us that God’s love for us will never run out; it brings us back into right relationship with the Giver of Life. Take some time to consider where you might need to reconcile with God or another person and resolve to make it right as quickly as possible.

St. Ignatius always ended the Examen with the Lord’s Prayer. This simple guide is so beautiful because it invites us to remember God and the life God has given us. It brings us full circle back to David’s Psalm of praise and remembrance: “O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.” Psalm 139:1, NLT

## EXPERIENCING AUTHENTIC LOVE

Taken from the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, Father's House Retreat

The ultimate act of love is the cross. We've heard this so many times that it may become rote to us.

But pray now that you may receive this love from God in a brand new way as you place yourself at the foot of the cross at the moment the lance enters into Christ's side after His death. Blood and water pour out. Every last drop of blood has been shed by Christ to prove God's love for us.

Recall Jesus's words: And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent (John 17:3).

He's done all this, suffered all this—pouring Himself out even in death to prove this; to win us over.

Again recall Jesus's words: "O righteous Father... I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:25a, 26)

Jesus came you for this purpose and is leading you to this reality. He has labored for you in life, bled for you on the cross and continued to pray and seek you beyond the cross to make known the love with which God the Father has loved Him. He wants to draw you into that experience of profound love that they share.

Look upon the face of that love on the cross. Allow the blood and water to pour out upon you as it did upon the centurion who lanced Him—be sanctified by this outpouring of love. Let His grace pour out upon you.

Allow yourself to feel the anguish of the Father at this moment. His child having been mocked and killed in His presence—holding Himself back, allowing it to happen. His anguish was manifest in Jesus' mother, Mary in a very profound way. Experience her anguish with her, a reflection of God's, as they lower Jesus' body from the cross.

But with that anguish, God's heart still overflows with love for you—with a love that cost Him everything, that is so strong and persistent and powerful. A love that has hurt Him. He has set the bar for love; given us a perfect example. But He also shown His love for us in a very tangible way on this cross set before you.

Pray for God to reveal His love more deeply for you now. Let Him begin to pull the curtain aside even just a crack more to release His love upon you and let it radiate over you like the blood and water did as it rushed from Jesus side.

Pray with Mary in this moment of grace and remain in God's love for a few moments.

# EXPLOSIVE GOSPEL

The Gospel must EXPLODE in our personal and community life. It is a word capable of revolutionizing our way of feeling and thinking, living the faith and immersing ourselves in the reality where God has placed us. The goal is a meditation that leads to interiorization and the incarnation of God's Word into our daily life.

*Read this Gospel passage SLOWLY 3 times. The first time imagine how God looks upon you with a deep love. What sticks out to you? The second time, ask God to reveal to you where you have rejected His love. What sticks out to you? The final time, ask God to show you how He wants you to share what you've just learned. What sticks out to you?*

Luke 19:1-10

He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

## 1) A gaze of love – Meditation and Contemplation

This is the moment to contemplate and meditate on the text. We do this in order to gather the maximum love that God, through His Word, wants to give us. Look with love at the Word and the Word will look back at you with love!  
Ask God to reveal to you how He looks upon you with His infinite love.

## 2) A gaze of judgment and truth

We are confronted by the Word not only in love because this love enlightens us as to where we must grow or where there may be contradictions in our lives personally or in the community.

Ask God to reveal to you where you have rejected His love and are living alone in sin. How does God want you to receive His mercy and forgiveness?

## 3) An apostolic response

We are invited in the third moment to future apostolic action. It is where we are invited to make a commitment to become prophets of the Gospel that revolutionizes our lives.

Ask God, "How are You inviting me to witness Your love to others? How do you want me to share with others what I have received from You?"

# HOW TO PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE

## (Lectio Divina)

### 1. Lectio

Lectio simply means 'read.' Start somewhere familiar, like one of the Gospels, and read a section. Before you start, ask the Holy Spirit, the author of Sacred Scripture, to come open your heart and to guide your mind. When you begin reading, read through the passage slowly and attentively. When you finish, read through the passage again and take notice of any words that stand out to you as you read.

### 2. Meditatio

In the meditatio (meditation) step, allow yourself to enter into the passage you just read. Perhaps you are one of the disciples or simply someone in the crowd. Use your imagination and bring the scene to life.

Also think about the words that stuck out as you read and wrestle with why they were highlighted as you read.

### 3. Oratio

At this point, you move from the head and go to the heart. In the oratio phase, you turn over everything that was in meditatio to God in prayer. Ask him why the words stuck out, why the passage unfolded like it did in your meditation. Be sure to also listen to what the Lord has to say to you because He wants to speak to you.

### 4. Contemplatio

The last thing to do is contemplation. Essentially, it's time to take it all in. Rest in what God has spoken to you in His Word. Simply just sit and be with the God who loves you.

# THE ROSARY

The Rosary is often viewed as one of the most boring prayers in our faith. However, when it is prayed the way Mary intended it, it comes alive and we encounter the life of Christ in a new way – every time.

Here are the basics:

**APOSTLES CREED** // I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

**OUR FATHER** // Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

**HAIL MARY** // Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen.

**GLORY BE** // Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**FATIMA PRAYER** // O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy. Amen.

**HAIL HOLY QUEEN** // Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.



Each set of ten beads gives you a period of time to meditate on some part of Jesus' life. There are 4 different "sets" called Mysteries: the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous. As you pray the rosary, meditate & imagine what it would have been like for Mary, Joseph, the Apostles, or Jesus during that time. Here are the mysteries:

## PRAY ON MONDAY & SATURDAY: JOYFUL

### PRAY ON SUNDAY & WEDNESDAY: GLORIOUS

- 1) Resurrection
  - 2) Ascension
  - 3) Descent of the Holy Spirit
  - 4) Assumption of Mary
  - 5) Coronation of Mary
- 1) Annunciation
  - 2) Visitation
  - 3) Nativity
  - 4) Presentation
  - 5) Finding of Child Jesus

PRAY ON TUESDAY & FRIDAY: SORROWFUL

- 1) Agony in the Garden
- 2) Scourging at the Pillar
- 3) Crowning of Thorns
- 4) Carrying of the Cross
- 5) Crucifixion

PRAY ON THURSDAY: LUMINOUS

- 1) Baptism
- 2) Wedding Feast at Cana
- 3) Proclamation of the Kingdom
- 4) Transfiguration
- 5) Institution of the Eucharist



**THE INCREDULITY OF SAINT THOMAS**

*Caravaggio*

## PRAYING WITH ART

Often our prayer is internal, and the Lord speaks to our hearts in silence. Another way to pray is by contemplating a piece of art. “Spiritual directors call meditating on a picture “Visio Divina.” Applied to a Bible passage, it’s an imaginative and refreshing form of Scripture meditation that helps us to enter into the narrative of Scripture and bring ourselves to Jesus. It’s similar to Lectio Divina, but instead of quietly listening to God through words we use a picture.”

This piece is called *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, by Caravaggio. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully.

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”— John 20:24-29

Spend time observing the painting. Remain in quiet prayer to absorb this word from God. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you silently meditate on these questions:

What is one word or phrase that you’re especially drawn to?

What do you notice?

What part of the painting or character in it does God especially draw your attention to?

What is the mood of the artwork?

What do the postures and facial expressions say about how they are feeling?

Which figure do you most identify with? Why?

How would you participate in the scene?

Does the artist’s depiction of the subject affirm or challenge the way you thought of the subject previously?

If you were the artist how would you depict the scene differently? Why?

What events in your life does this painting bring to mind?

How does the artwork call you to respond?

## PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray The Lord's Prayer. Pray it on loop until you mean it. Elaborate as you pray.
- Pray the Psalms. Read a few and highlight phrases you want to repeat to God. When you're done picking out phrases, read the highlighted passages in praise to God. Personalize them.
- Pray for your family. Begin closest to you and work your way out. Don't just say their names. Think about what they need, what God's vision for them might be. Pray until you can't think of another family member.
- Pray your goals. Make a list and pray over it, asking God to grow, stretch and challenge you in these directions. Be sure to make at least some of the goals spiritual maturity markers.
- Pray your favorite passage of scripture. Read it and either ask God to do what He's promised to do or thank Him for the blessing communicated there.
- Make a list of people you don't like. Pray for God to bless them. Don't be passive aggressive.
- Be totally silent for three minutes. Don't talk and don't talk to yourself. Try to still your thoughts. At the end of that three minutes ask God what you should pray for. Listen and pray for whatever pops into your head.
- Write your prayers. This is great if you can't keep your thoughts focused and often end up wandering. Start like you're writing a letter: "Dear God..."
- Pray the fruits of the Spirit, that God would fill you with His Spirit and grow in you love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Pray it for your family & friends.
- Pray for Fr. Carlson. Pray that he wouldn't be led into temptation. Pray that he would have eyes to see. Pray for his heart.
- Pray your questions. Make a list of things you wonder. Ask God to show you answers.
- Channel your anger. Make a list of things you're angry about and pray it. Ask God to help you see things you're not seeing—to give you humility, patience and perspective. Ask Him to calm your spirit and lead you into peace.
- Pray for the president. Pray with hope, believing the best about who he is as a man. Ask God to work through him and guide him. Pray for congressmen and senators and mayors and city councilmen and women while you're at it.
- Pray your talents. Make a list of what you're good at and ask God to use those talents for His glory.
- Pray your weaknesses. Make a list of what you're bad at and pray that God would be glorified in those spots. Ask God to help you grow where you should grow and accept what you should accept.
- Pray over your broken relationships—for forgiveness to flow.
- Think of something you really don't want to pray about. Pray about that.

## WHEN YOU ARE ...

Afraid	_____	Psalms 34:4-10	_____	Matthew 10:26-33
Anxious	_____	Psalms 46	_____	Matthew 6:25-34 _____ Philippians 4:4-7
Backsliding	_____	Psalms 51	_____	1 John 1:4-9
Bereaved	_____	Matthew 5:4	_____	2 Corinthians 1:34
Bitter or Critical	_____	1 Corinthians 13		
Conscious of Sin	_____	Proverbs 28:13		
Defeated	_____	Romans 8:31-39		
Depressed	_____	Psalms 34		
Disaster Threatening	_____	Psalms 91	_____	Luke 8:22-25
Discouraged	_____	Psalms 23	_____	2 Corinthians 4:7-18 _____ Philippians 4:4-7
Feeling Doubtful	_____	Matthew 8:26	_____	Hebrews 11
Facing a Crisis	_____	Psalms 121	_____	Matthew 6:25-34 _____ Hebrews 4:16
Faith Fails	_____	Psalms 42:5	_____	Hebrews 11
Friends Fail	_____	Psalms 41:9-13	_____	Romans 12:14-21 _____ 2 Timothy 4:16-18
Leaving Home	_____	Psalms 121	_____	Matthew 10:16-20
Lonely	_____	Psalms 23	_____	Hebrews 13:5-6
Needing God's Protection	_____	Psalms 27:1-6	_____	Psalms 91 _____ Philippians 4:19
Needing Guidance	_____	Psalms 32:8	_____	Proverbs 3:5-6
Needing Peace	_____	John 14:1-4	_____	Rom 5:1-5 _____ Philippians 4:6-7
Needing Rules for Living	_____	Romans 12		
Overcome	_____	Psalms 6	_____	Romans 8:31-39 _____ 1 John 1:4-9
Prayerful	_____	Psalms 4, 42	_____	Luke 11:1-13 _____ John 17
Protected	_____	Psalms 18:1-3	_____	Psalms 34:7
Sick or in Pain	_____	Psalms 38	_____	Rom 5:3-5 _____ 1 Pet 4:12-19
Sorrowful	_____	Psalms 51	_____	John 14 _____ 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Tempted	_____	Psalms 1	_____	Matthew 26:41 _____ Philippians 4:8





















