

# An Inquirer Seeking to Re-ignite His Faith

*For those who realize they need to take their faith seriously, awaken their Baptismal graces, learn what they were never taught, and start the real Christian walk. This will be referred to as the intention of the individual in the following presentation.*

Today, you have made this realization. Know that this new understanding is a movement of the Holy Spirit. It is your chance to respond in a very fruitful way. God is offering you a great gift. He will wait for your response, but only for so long.

## Step One: Respond to the Inspiration

- Make a heartfelt and [honest prayer](#) to God telling Him your *intention*
- Tell Him that you believe He is listening and you trust that He desires to aid you and will respond, in His way, to your prayer
- Reflect on the fact that, if you meant this prayer, everything in your life is about to change.

## Step Two: Commit to Praying Daily

- As with all things human beings do, there must be consistency and follow-through
- Choose a time each day to [pray](#), repeating your basic *intention* and then speaking heart-to-heart with Our Lord about anything you wish to tell Him or ask Him
- Begin to think about your past life (your life up until this inspiration) and the sins you still carry with you
- As you pray, focus on four primary elements:
  - o adoration of God (of His goodness, beauty, power, glory, promises, generosity, etc.),
  - o sorrow and regret for the sins you have committed in your life (all the while with a trust that God is ready to forgive you for *all* of these sins)
  - o thanksgiving for the blessings you have seen from Him (in your own life and in creation),
  - o asking God for anything and everything you might feel you need at this moment in your life, as well as praying for others whose needs you know

## Step Three: Visit the Church

- Your first visit to the Church could be, depending on your readiness, a simple visit to be in the [Presence of Our Lord](#) in the Most Blessed Sacrament.
  - o This is the holiest place on earth and the best place to pray.
  - o However, it is important to be relaxed and in a good mindset when you pray so you can focus. Some people have a history that makes the Church feel like a difficult place to pray. This will pass with time, grace, and education.
- Try to make a regular habit of making visits to the Church for a brief, or prolonged, [period of prayer](#).
- This is a source of tremendous grace and allows Our Lord to act upon your soul in powerful ways. It also places you in closer proximity to Our Lady and the Saints and the Angels – to [the entire community of Heaven](#) – which will make even more graces and supernatural aids readily available to you.

## Step Four: Meet with the [Priest](#)

- In order to formally return to the practice of your faith, it is recommended that you meet with the Priest.
  - o The Priest, when he knows the reason for your requested meeting, will receive you with [great joy](#), as Our Lord said the Angels do when a sinner repents, and as Our Lord Himself does when one of His lost sheep is found!
  - o Remember that he is appointed by Holy Mother Church and shares in the spiritual authority entrusted by Our Lord Jesus Christ first to the Apostles.
  - o Remember also that the Priest is a man with a personality and a past. As you meet with him, bringing your personality and your past, be patient with him and remember that God has established him as His own spiritual instrument.
- The first thing you will need to do when you meet with him, after speaking to him and explaining your *intention* and desires, is to go to Confession.

## Step Five: Go to [Confession](#)

- When we drift away from God for a time, no matter how long, our souls lack an encounter with the flow of His graces and supernatural life.
- When we return, when we “come to our senses” as did the Prodigal Son when he reflected on the life he had fallen into after abandoning his Father, we need to be cleansed and healed.
- This is why God [established](#) the Sacrament of Confession (or *Reconciliation*)
- When a priest knows that you have been away from the Faith for a while and are now returning, he will be overjoyed. Priests and Bishops often speak of the joy of being the instrument that God uses in bringing back into the Sheepfold of Christ those who had wandered away for a time.

## Step Six: Return to Holy [Mass](#)

- While you have never been forbidden from attending Holy Mass at any point, once you have been reconciled to God and to His Church, you are now [permitted](#) to receive the Bread of Angels – Holy Communion – once again.
- It is important that you wait until after you go to Confession before receiving Our Lord. He, in Sacred Scripture and in the teachings of His Church, is clear that only those whose lives are properly ordered according to His Laws may receive Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

## Step Seven: Commit to Making the Catholic Faith a Regular Element of Your Life

- Now that you have returned, the flow of sanctifying [grace](#) into your soul is a constant.
- This new *constant* must be maintained and [strengthened](#). It is intended to bear fruit, grow, expand, and bear more fruit, spreading into every aspect of your life and, then, out from you and into the world.
- United again to Christ, you are a branch on the Vine which is Christ. He is flooding you with His own divine life and power. He intends for you to grow and grow and grow, bearing copious amounts of spiritual fruit for yourself and for others.
- Being a member of the Mystical Body of Christ is an active and progressive reality. The joy and peace and beauty you will experience will be active and progressive as well.

## Step Eight: Establish the Routines of Spiritual Maintenance

- Go to Holy Mass every [Sunday](#)
- Go to Confession regularly. Yearly Confession is required. Monthly Confession is highly encouraged.
  - o If you are aware of having committed a mortal sin, plan to go to Confession as soon as possible! Priests, at some parishes, offer Confession several times a week. If that is not available, you may also call the office to schedule a time for Confession and the priest will meet you in the Church. If none of these is available, and you have to wait for many days to get to Confession, confess your sins to Our Lord and trust that He will forgive you. If the sin is mortal, you must refrain from receiving Our Lord until you go to Confession. [However](#), if you make what is called “an act of perfect contrition,” in which you tell God you are sorry for your sins *because* you love God and are sorry for having offended Him, aware that your sins caused His suffering and death on the Cross. This degree of sorrow for sins will restore you to a state of grace while you await Confession.
- Pray daily, at least 15 minutes but [ideally](#) at least 30 [minutes](#)
- Avoid near occasions of sin

## Step Nine: Establish the Routines for Spiritual Growth

- In order to grow in the grace of God, you must remove all obstacles that prevent your growth as well as bring into your life those things that nurture the life of grace
- Remove Personal Obstacles
  - o Avoid near occasions of sin
  - o Analyze your habits and purge what is [contrary to God's will](#)
  - o Analyze your friends and see if you are keeping bad companions in your life
  - o Analyze your past-times and enjoyments and cease what is sinful
  - o Analyze your [state in life](#) and bring that in line with God's will
    - Are you living with someone with whom you are not married (“cohabitation”)?
    - Are you living with someone with whom you were married outside of the Church (i.e. contrary to the Church's laws of marriage)?
    - Are you in a relationship which is characterized by sin?
    - If any of these are “yes,” and you are not sure what to do so that you may maintain your relationship with God and His grace in your life, speak to the Priest about it and he will counsel you.
- Nurture the Life of [Grace](#)
  - o Attend events at the Church
  - o Read the [Bible](#) daily
  - o Read the [Catechism daily](#)
  - o Learn about the [Rosary](#) and pray that [often](#) (ideally on a daily basis)

## Step Ten: Ensure You are Obedient to the Church's Laws

- After establishing a regular Catholic life in the short-term, it is critical that you make sure you are being obedient to the *Holy Mother* Church, given to us by Christ to guide us in this life.
- Obey the [Precepts](#) of the [Church](#). These are understood as the *minimum requirements* to maintain identifying yourself as a Catholic. These are not what will be sufficient to make one into a Saint.
  - o 1. Attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation, and rest from servile labor.
  - o 2. Confess your sins at least once a year.
  - o 3. Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
  - o 4. Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
  - o 5. Help provide for the needs of the Church.
  - o 6. Observe the Church's laws on marriage.
- The Church binds us, as her children, to the minimum efforts which will at least *maintain* the life of grace in the soul. However, the goal, as the Church herself also makes clear, is not simply *doing the minimum*, but giving our entire lives to the Lord.

## Step Eleven: Soar in the Spiritual Life

- Once all of the above is well-established, it is time for the soul to give more to God and ask more help of God and the entire Communion of Saints.
- Increase Prayer
  - o The spiritual life has no [limitation](#). It can grow and grow without reaching an extreme beyond which the soul can no longer progress.
  - o Add thirty minutes of meditation each day
  - o Pray the Rosary each day
  - o Observe the Liturgical Calendar carefully and celebrate the Feast Days of the Saints
  - o Pray novenas (nine days of prayer committed to a specific intention and directed toward a specific Saint or to Our Lady under a specific title)
- Increase Heavenly Focus (Detachment)
  - o Embrace a penitential life. Detachment from earthly things is *necessary* to progress in the spiritual life. Every Saint has reached sanctity along this path.
  - o In addition to avoiding eating meat on Fridays (obligatory during Lent but traditional, and highly encouraged, all year) add fasting on Friday. Consider adding fasting on an additional day.
  - o Make Lent truly penitential. Don't do the minimum. Look back to the ancient practices (and those prior to the 1960s) and embrace some of those
  - o Analyze your diet and remove things that are indulgent (even if they are not sinful)
  - o Make small acts of sacrifice and self-denial daily. Do so also at every meal.
- Increase Good Deeds
  - o "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 5:16
  - o Choose to do a certain number of good deeds each day or each week.
  - o Donate more to the Church or to a good religious Order of monks or nuns
  - o Donate food or time or money to a food pantry or homeless shelter
  - o Give away possessions that you no longer use or need.
- Take up Spiritual Warfare Practices
  - o Add the St. Michael the Archangel prayer to your daily routine
  - o Bring the sacramentals into your life on a regular basis.
  - o Learn about the battle which we face against the devil and his fallen angels
  - o Learn the spiritual and sacramental tools we can use to block the devil of interfering in our lives and thwarting our spiritual progress.

## Step Twelve: Sanctify Everything in Your Life

- Have your home and car [blessed](#).
- Establish holy water fonts in the major rooms in your [home](#)
- Hang a Crucifix on the wall in the rooms.
- Hang sacred images in your home
- [Learn](#) about and begin wearing the Scapular, St. Benedict Medal, and Miraculous Medal