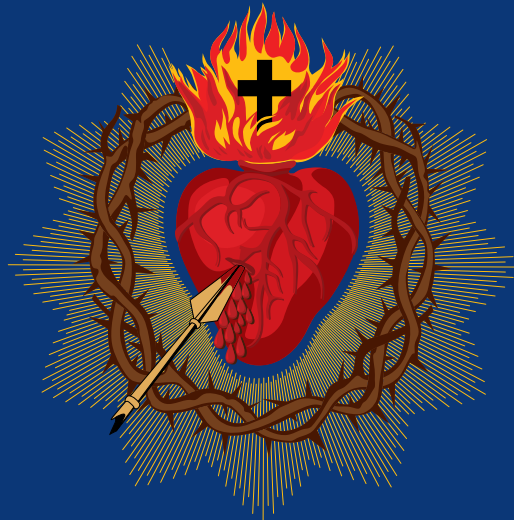


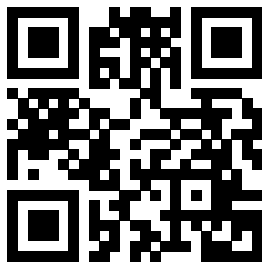


HEART OF THE GOSPEL A SCRIPT FOR LEADERS



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Notes on the Retreat Script:

Notes for facilitators are written in italics.

Lines meant to be read aloud are written in this way:

“An example of plain black text intended to be read aloud.

“When there are multiple paragraphs meant to be said aloud one after another, quotation marks will not close until after the final paragraph.”

Important actions to perform are written in this way:

This text is red, indicating that you should do (not say) what is written.

Some notes will indicate that certain text or actions are only to be read or done in certain contexts. These notes will always look as follows:

IF you are having a meal before Mass...

Skip these notes if they do not apply to you. Feel free to cross them out if doing so will help.

There will be times when the lines to be spoken indicate where you should fill in specific information. These lines will look like this:

“My name is [NAME], and on behalf of [COUNCIL NAME & NUMBER], welcome to the retreat!”

Do not read aloud the words in brackets; replace them with the correct information as you speak.

You will find small boxes in this script in which you can write in the time when certain lines should be spoken or actions undertaken. The boxes look like this:



These boxes are placed for your convenience.

Feel free to write notes in the script.



There is no language in the script regarding breaks. Please amend the script as needed for the break times and, if applicable, meals in your schedule.

The first page of the retreatant guide has a brief introduction with some prompts for discussion. The introduction in the retreatant guide is not a mandatory part of the retreat, but you can direct men to read it and discuss the prompts to help them prepare for the retreat and to fill the time between their arrival and the scheduled start of the retreat. These prompts can supplement any icebreaker questions you provide men as they arrive before the retreat is scheduled to begin.

Depending on his schedule, your pastor may be present for all, some, or only a little of the retreat. Prior to the retreat, work out with him how he would like to participate when he is present. He may desire to lead prayer, offer his insight, or propose some discussion prompts of his own. Honor his vocation and freedom by asking him what he would like to do when he is present at the retreat; amend the script as necessary.

The Heart of the Gospel Retreat Script

Before you start, be sure that the Intro video is cued and ready to play.

At , say:

“Welcome, brothers! It is good to be with you on the Heart of the Gospel retreat today! My name is [NAME], and on behalf of [COUNCIL NAME & NUMBER], welcome to the retreat!

“Let’s begin by turning to page 2 of your retreatant guides and praying the opening prayer. Please, turn to page 2 and pray with me our opening prayer:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Loving Father,
You created us for fellowship with You and each other.
Through Adam’s fall we were captured by the enemy,
But Your Son, Jesus, rescued us from slavery to sin and death,
And makes us His brothers through Baptism.
Renew in our minds and hearts
A sense of wonder and awe
At what Jesus has accomplished for us
By His suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
Enflame our hearts with love for Jesus,
So we may respond to His sacrifice with tireless devotion.



Equip us for the mission You have in store for us.
Make us into the heroic men You desire us to be.
Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us
So that we may serve You
As You renew the human family.
We ask all these things in the most powerful Name of Jesus.

“Amen.

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“It is good to pray together with you! Thank you, brothers! As I said, my name is [NAME], and I will be facilitating the retreat.”

IF there are multiple facilitators, say:

“Joining me will be [NAMES OF OTHER FACILITATORS], who will be co-facilitating the retreat with me.”

Other facilitators should stand, wave, or otherwise indicate who they are when their names are said.

Say:

“You are seated in groups, and these groups will remain the same for the duration of the retreat. You’ll talk together, eat together, and pray together. In this way, you will build trust and rapport with your brothers in Christ here today and have a better experience.

“This retreat has three primary parts: times of prayer, formation talks in video form, and fraternal discussion with your brothers. These parts mirror the three elements of *Cor*: prayer, formation, and fraternity. You can think of this retreat as one big *Cor* session, and I invite you to bring the same prayerful, open, and attentive mindset to the retreat as you would at *Cor* or any other men’s group in which you participate.

“Remember that there is an expectation of confidentiality around all our discussions. Respect the trust that other men place in you. That said, group discussion is not the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so you may want to keep to yourself specific details best mentioned in the confessional.

“We’ll start things off with a brief video that introduces Fr. John Riccardo, our retreat leader, and the goals of the retreat. After the video, we’ll have some time for discussion at your tables.



IF a meal is ongoing, say:

“Please continue to enjoy the meal while the video is playing and discussion is happening.”

Say:

“Discussion questions are in your retreatant guide; please be sure to keep the guide handy throughout the retreat. And now, Fr. Riccardo.”

Play the Intro Video.

Stop the Intro Video when it concludes. Be sure to manually stop it so that you do not accidentally autoplay another video.

Say:

“For this discussion, and for all discussions during the retreat, please designate a discussion leader for your table. A discussion leader’s role is to facilitate conversation by reading the questions aloud as necessary throughout the discussion. Each discussion can have a different leader, or the same leader; it is up to you. Turn to page 2 of your retreatant guide and use the questions there to start, but don’t feel limited by them.”

Discussion should end at [redacted].

During this discussion, you or another leader should ensure the video for Talk 1 is cued and ready to play. After that is done, you and other leaders can visit tables to help promote good discussion if necessary and perform any additional tasks that need to be done.

At [redacted], say:

“All right, brothers, we’re going to move to the next part of the retreat.

“The main body of the retreat is structured around five talks Fr. Riccardo delivered on March 22nd, 2025 in Lafayette, Louisiana, during Lent.

“Father’s team of missionaries was with him for the talks, so he will refer to different people on the team who do not appear in the videos.

“You don’t have to take notes during the talks, but if you want to, please use your retreatant guide.



“The first Talk is called, ‘The Importance of Stories’. Let’s begin.”

Play Talk 1.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared on screen at the end of the video.

Say:

“Brothers, let’s begin discussion at our tables now with the questions on screen, which are also in your retreatant guide on page 3. Please turn to page 3 and discuss the questions together.”

Discussion should end at [redacted].

During discussion, leaders should prepare for Lectio Divina, gently guide table discussions if needed, and perform any other necessary tasks.

Approximately 5 minutes before it is time to end discussion, prepare the video for Talk 2.

At [redacted], say:

“All right, men, we’re going to conclude our discussions now. Thank you.

“Questions about how you see the world and how you understand God are important to answer. Hopefully you have a better sense of your own worldview and image of God now.

“But, knowing how you see God and the world, while good, is just the start. Jesus calls us to something more than self-knowledge, and that’s what we’re going to focus on during our first time of prayer together.

“We’re going to pray in a way called, ‘Lectio Divina’, which in really simple terms is an ancient way of prayerfully meditating on Scripture. The Scripture passage we will use is from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, chapter 12, verse 2:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

“The verse is in our retreatant guide, as is the script for prayer we will be following. During periods of silence it is appropriate to read and re-read the verse. Now, brothers, let’s begin.”



For Lectio, pray:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you to learn more about you.
In the silence, open our minds and hearts to your Holy Spirit.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Blessed Mother, we ask you to lead us to your Son. Holy Spirit, enter our minds and hearts so that we, like Mary, can bring Jesus to the world. Amen.

“For this first step, called lectio, ask yourself this question: ‘What does the reading say in itself?’
Here is our reading:”

Slowly, clearly, and deliberately, pray:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Once again, our reading:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“For the second step, called meditatio, we now ask ourselves the questions, ‘What is the passage saying to me? What really sticks out to me?’ These questions can help us understand what God might be saying to us through this verse. We will now have a longer period of silence.”

Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“We move now to the third step, called, oratio. Think about what God just communicated to you during the second step. What do you want to say back to him in silent prayer? Speak to Jesus in your heart now.”

Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“The fourth and final step is called contemplatio. During this time, we simply open ourselves to God’s presence and be with Him. You can ask yourself, ‘What conversion of mind, heart, and life is God asking of me?’ But you may also simply enjoy God’s loving presence.”



Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Let us pray together:

“We thank you, Lord Jesus, for this time in prayer with you. Please continue to open our minds and hearts to the power of the Gospel during this retreat. Help us to draw closer to you and to each other. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Thank you, brothers, for your prayer. On page 5 in the retreatant guide, you’ll find some prompts for reflection. Please turn to page 5 now and share your thoughts with your brothers at your table.”

End discussion at [redacted] .

During discussion, leaders should gently help facilitate discussion at tables where such help is needed.

At [redacted] say:

“Please finish your discussions, brothers. We’re going to move to the next part of the retreat. Thank you so much.

“We’re going to watch Fr. John’s next talk now, which is titled, ‘Created’. After the talk, we’ll have more discussion and another time of prayer so that we can more deeply understand what it means to be created by God.”

Play Talk 2.

Pause the video when the final questions fully appear on screen.

Say:

“Brothers, please take time now to discuss these questions at your tables. Please turn to page 6 in your retreatant guide to find them.”

End discussion at [redacted] .

Five minutes before the end of discussion, prepare the video for Talk 3.

At [redacted] say:

“We’re going to move to another time of prayer now. Would you please conclude your conversations? Thank you.

Script continues on next page



“We will again pray Lectio Divina, but this time with a much longer passage: almost the entirety of Psalm 8. Please turn to page 7 in your retreatant guide. We’ll follow the same format as last time, but give more time for prayer. Let’s begin.”

Pray:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you to learn more about you. In the silence, open our minds and hearts to your Holy Spirit.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Blessed Mother, we ask you to lead us to your Son. Holy Spirit, enter our minds and hearts so that we, like Mary, can bring Jesus to the world. Amen.

“For the first step, lectio, ask yourself this question: ‘What does the reading say in itself?’ Here is our reading, which is Psalm 8 verses 2-10:”

Slowly, clearly, and deliberately, pray:

**“O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens
with the mouths of babes and infants.
You have established a bulwark against your foes,
to silence enemy and avenger.
When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars that you set in place—
What is man that you are mindful of him,
and a son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god,
crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
put all things at his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!”**



Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Once again, our reading:

**“O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens
with the mouths of babes and infants.
You have established a bulwark against your foes,
to silence enemy and avenger.
When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars that you set in place—
What is man that you are mindful of him,
and a son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god,
crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
put all things at his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!”**

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“For *meditatio*, the second step, we now ask ourselves the questions, ‘What is the passage saying to me? What really sticks out to me?’ These questions can help us understand what God might be saying to us through this verse. We will now have a longer period of silence.”

Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“We move now to *oratio*, step three. Think about what God just communicated to you during the second step. What do you want to say to Him in silent prayer? Speak to Jesus in your heart now.”

Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Now, during our final step, *contemplatio*, we simply open ourselves to God’s presence and be with him. You can ask yourself, ‘What conversion of mind, heart, and life is God asking of me?’ But you may also simply enjoy God’s loving presence.”



Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Let us pray together: We thank you, Lord Jesus, for this time in prayer with you. Please continue to open our minds and hearts to the power of the Gospel during this retreat. Help us to draw closer to you and to each other. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

When Lectio Divina concludes, say:

“I am very grateful that we prayed together again, Brothers. Thank you. We will now have a brief discussion. Questions can be found on page 8 of the retreatant guide. Please turn to page 8 now.”

End discussion at .

During this discussion, leaders should be actively and frequently checking in on discussions at tables (by listening, not by interjecting) to see how conversations are going. Also, double-check that Talk 3 is ready to play.

At [TIMEBOX] say:

“Let’s conclude our discussion now, brothers. Thank you.

“Fr. John’s next talk is titled, ‘Captured’, and it can be understood as the ‘bad news’ that comes before the ‘good news’. As such, Fr. John focuses on the themes of sin and evil, which we rightly find difficult and disturbing to contemplate. If, during this talk, you feel the need to step away for a moment, please feel free to do so. Similarly, if you would like to take a moment to speak privately with a member of the leadership team, just let me or another team member know.

“It is important to remember that, even when we are focusing on what’s wrong with the world, there is something good we can learn from the Lord. Let’s open our minds and hearts to what God wants to reveal to us through this next talk.”

Play Talk 3.

Pause the video when the final questions appear.

Say:

“For this discussion, brothers, we have questions for you on page 9 of the retreatant guide. They are a great place to start, but please do not feel limited by them. There’s a lot to consider from this talk, and if something Fr. John said that is not covered by the questions is really stirring your heart, go ahead and discuss it in a respectful way.”



End discussion at [redacted] .

During this discussion, leaders should be actively and frequently checking in on discussions at tables (by listening, not by interjecting) to see how conversations are going. Also, be sure that Talk 4 is ready to play.

At [redacted] say:

“My brothers, we’re going to move to the good news soon, so please bring the discussions to an end. Thank you so much.”

“In our fourth talk, titled, ‘Rescued’, Fr. John will tell the story of Jesus’ sacrifice for us in a way that sheds new light on who Jesus really is. After the video, rather than have another discussion immediately, we’re going to move directly into a time of prayer so we can talk to Jesus before talking with each other.”

“Now, on to the fourth talk.”

Play Talk 4.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared.

Say:

“These prompts on the screen are available on page 11 of your retreatant guide, along with other prayer suggestions, and we ask you to consider them during Holy Hour. Feel free to bring a pen and the retreatant guide with you during Holy Hour.

“That said, when you come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, please do not feel limited by the prompts. Speak to Him honestly in the silence of your heart. Tell Him about what’s happening in your life, and ask Him to give you the grace you need to do His will. Don’t be afraid to just sit in silence and listen to what Jesus wants to tell you in your heart, too.

“If you want, you can pray the rosary or your other favorite devotions, meditate on Scripture, or kneel before the altar; however you choose to pray, try to focus entirely on Jesus, and invite Him to enter your heart.

“We will have the chance to go to Confession during Holy Hour. I invite you to go to Confession and encounter the saving mercy of God if you are moved to do so.

“Now, let’s go to Jesus.”

Lead the men to the Holy Hour.

Pray.



End Holy Hour at [redacted]. Or as close to it as possible. Be sure to inform your pastor (or whoever is providing Holy Hour to you) of the time when Holy Hour should end. If the priest hearing confessions is also responsible for reposing the Blessed Sacrament, be sure to work out how to ensure Holy Hour concludes in a timely manner beforehand in the event he has a long line at the confessional.

While the majority of the leadership team should pray during Holy Hour, at least one member of the leadership team should stay back to cue up Talk 5 and make any other preparations necessary at this time before going to Holy Hour.

Provide #2075 (A Guide to Confession) and #4772 (A Guide to Praying the Rosary) to your men. Make sure rosaries are available.

If you are offering a set program of prayer for Holy Hour, like a group rosary, sung hymns, or a short witness (which needs to be pre-written, and pre-approved by your pastor), inform the men that they will be invited to pray in that way, and consider providing them a printout with the information.

When Holy Hour ends say:

“Brothers, let’s head back to our tables for discussion.”

Lead the men back to the tables for discussion.

When everyone has returned say:

“Please turn to page 13 on your retreatant guides to find prompts for discussion. It is not necessary to share your prayer experience in Holy Hour if you don’t want to do so.”

End discussion at [redacted].

Leadership team members should check in on the discussion by briefly listening to conversations happening at tables. Any tasks that need to be completed should be completed. If you have not yet cued up Talk 5, do so now.

At [redacted] say:

“Brothers, please finish up your discussion now. Thank you.

“We’re going to start our fifth talk now, titled, “Response.” In this talk, Fr. John is going to lay out different ways we can respond to what Jesus has done for us. In other words, we’re going to get a sense of our mission as Catholic men.

Let’s see what Fr. John has to say.”



Play Talk 5.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared.

Say:

“Fr. John has given us a clear explanation of the heart of the Gospel, and a clear vision for some ways we can respond to what Jesus has done for us. He gave us some thought-provoking examples, and used some language meant to get us to take seriously how we can serve the Lord.

I want to reinforce what Fr. Riccardo said: being an ‘Agent of Resistance’ is a fundamentally peaceful mission. Our spiritual ‘weapons’ are truth, faith, hope, and, of course, charity, unity, and fraternity.

Now, let’s turn to page 14 in the retreatant guide and use the prompts there to begin discussion.”

Discussion should end at [redacted].

IF you are serving a meal before Mass, be sure to warn men to stop eating at least 45 minutes before Mass begins. Food should be packed up and put away by that time, which you can mark here:

[redacted].

Check in on table discussion by briefly listening to conversation. Prepare the Outro video and perform any other necessary tasks at this time.

At [redacted] say:

“My brothers, please bring your discussions to an end now. Thank you.

“In our final video of the retreat, Fr. John lays out a particular mission for Catholic men. This mission is simple, though it might not be easy, and is something that can be done – and should be done – in your home. Fr. John will explain.”

Play the Outro.

When the Outro ends, turn off the screen.



Say:

“We can evangelize at home, brothers, and it does not take years of training and extraordinary effort. If we make our homes places where Jesus Christ clearly reigns as Lord, and if we live as His disciples, we can draw more people to the Church.

“Now, we’ll have our final discussion of the retreat. Please turn to page 16 of the retreatant guide and review the prompts together.”

End discussion at [redacted].

During discussion, check in on conversations by listening. Perform other necessary duties as well.

At [redacted] say:

“It’s time to finish our conversations now, brothers. Thank you.

“The last part of our retreat is Mass. Let’s go together to worship the Lord Jesus and receive Him in Holy Communion.”

Lead the men to Mass.

Worship God together.

When Mass ends, lead the men back to their tables.

Say:

“Brothers, thank you. The Heart of the Gospel retreat is ending, but our mission is just beginning. Like Fr. John said, you don’t have to do this mission alone. Join your brothers in *Cor* to become better equipped for the mission.

“*Cor* at our parish meets [REGULAR DAY TIME AND LOCATION OF COR]. Our next *Cor*, which is on [DATE OF NEXT COR], will be a special retreat follow-up, so we really hope you attend.

“Before we all depart, there are some people we need to thank.”

The thanks section is not scripted, as it can vary widely. Be sure to thank your pastor and other parish clergy, parish staff, your grand knight and council, all your volunteers, your leadership team, and the men who attended the retreat. A round of applause at the end of the thank-you list is appropriate.



IF leaders of other men's groups assisted with the retreat in any way, thank them, as well.

When finished with the above expression of gratitude, say:

“We also want to express gratitude for everyone who helped us to be here on retreat: our wives and children, other family members, our friends, and everyone who was praying for us. Let’s give them a round of applause.”

After applause, say:

“One more item of importance: we’d like your feedback about this retreat. Please complete our survey by [EXPLAIN HOW TO ACCESS SURVEY]. If you can complete it today, we’d really appreciate it.

“And now, my brothers, please join me in our final retreat prayer, found on page 17 of your retreatant guide.”

Pray:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Loving Father,
We praise and thank You
For the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ,
And without fear we proclaim
Jesus is Lord.
Jesus is Lord of creation.
Jesus is Lord of all nations.
Jesus is Lord of our hearts.
Give us the grace we need
To grow in virtue
So that we may accomplish,
In cooperation with You,
The mission of bringing all whom we meet
Into Your Church, which is Your family.
Help us to grow closer to one another
In charity, unity, and fraternity,
So that, as brothers in Christ,
We may support each other in fulfilling this mission.
We ask all these things in the most powerful Name of Jesus.

“Amen.

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”



Say:

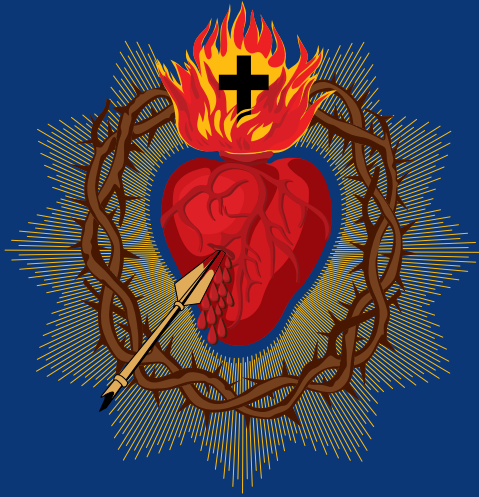
“God bless you, brothers, and Vivat Jesus!”

Bid farewell to all retreatants who are leaving, but do not be afraid to ask them for help cleaning up if necessary.

When you have finished cleaning up and restoring to order every space you have used, ensure A/V equipment is off, doors and windows are shut and locked as appropriate, and lights are off.

Then depart.

Congratulations! You have completed facilitating the Heart of the Gospel Retreat!



Cor

The Heart of Our Mission

