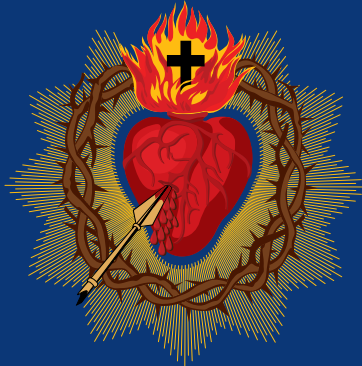




HEART OF THE GOSPEL RETREATANT GUIDE



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Welcome to the Heart of the Gospel retreat!



Dear Brother in Christ,

We are deeply convinced that “the gospel is the power of God for salvation” (Romans 1:16). And that power is effective, transformative, and explosive.

Though many men know the story of the Gospel, not enough of them have felt the *power* of the Gospel in their hearts. This retreat aims to change that for you and for the other men with you now.

Our goals for this retreat are three-fold:

1. Be overwhelmed by the Gospel.
2. Surrender our lives to Jesus.
3. Get mobilized for mission.

In other words, we want Jesus to tear down the walls around our hearts, we want to offer our hearts totally to Jesus, and we want to accept and carry out a new mission to bring the people we know to Jesus.

In preparation for what Fr. Riccardo will be sharing with us today, ask yourself these questions and discuss them with your group:

1. What do I want out of this retreat?
2. What am I willing to give to others during this retreat?
3. How can I open my mind and heart to God most effectively during this retreat?

We are so grateful you are here for the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat, and we pray God will abundantly bless you and the men on retreat with you.

Vivat Jesus!

Knights of Columbus Supreme Council
Evangelization and Faith Formation Team

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.

Intro Video Discussion Questions

- What words would you use to describe Jesus? Why?
- How much does Jesus matter to you in your day-to-day life?
- What in your life is acting as an obstacle to getting closer to Jesus?
- What in your life helps you to get closer to Jesus or keeps you close to him?

Talk 1: The Importance of Stories



Notes:

The kerygma is, “the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith.” – Pope Saint John Paul II

“This is how stories work. They invite listeners into a new world, and encourage them to make that world their own, to see their ordinary world from now on through this lens, within this grid.” N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*

Small Group Discussion

- What is your image of God?
- Where did that image come from?
- What is your relationship with your image of God?

Lectio Divina on Romans 12:2

Pray Together:

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.

Silent Reflection

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.

“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.”

At the conclusion of Lectio Divina, when the facilitator says, “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.

Small Group Discussion

- What is the spirit of the age?
- How do you think God wants to accomplish the renewal of your mind? What sort of transformation would it be for you?
- What do you think God’s will is for you, right now? This question can be understood as asking what God desires of you today at this moment, and it also can be understood as, what is your current thinking about what God wants you to do with your life?
- Do you think being “transformed by the renewal of your mind” is something God does for you by yourself or in community with others, or both? Why?

Notes:

Talk 2: Created



Why is there something rather than nothing?

Pray for the grace of Wonder & Awe.

“Good and gracious Father, we just ask that you would expand our minds and our imaginations as we try to grasp what it is that you have fashioned out of nothing and all out of love, most especially, that you’d help us understand the wonder that is the creation of our own very unique personal lives. Help us to know who you are and to know a little bit more who we are to you. We ask all this in Jesus’s name, Amen.”

Notes:

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...”
Genesis 1:31

Small Group Discussion

- What impact does pondering the grandeur of creation have on you?
- Contemplating the power of God and remembering that the creature He loves the most is you, what impact does this have on your stress, fear, and anxiety?

Lectio Divina on Psalm 8:2-10

Pray Together:

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.

Silent Reflection

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.

**“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!”**

*At the conclusion of Lectio Divina, when the facilitator says,
“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.

Small Group Discussion

- How do you praise God for the good gift that is creation?
- What aspect of nature most reminds you of God or reveals his goodness and grandeur? Why?
- How can you better accept the truth that, despite the unimaginable size of the universe He created, God loves you more than every star ever made? What lies are told to diminish this reality?
- What can you do to foster and develop your own sense of wonder and awe?

Talk 3: Captured



Why is everything so obviously messed up?

Pray for the graces of ‘Despair’ and Light.

“Father, we ask you to do what it is we just spoke about, but we turn to you with confidence, asking that you would both expose this one who so hates us, who accuses you and us, and that you would help us to taste, perhaps like we’ve never tasted before, just how utterly hopeless we would truly be if you had not shared your Son with us. All this, we ask in Jesus’s name, Amen.”

Notes:

“Enemy occupied territory – that is what this world is.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Small Group Discussion

- How does the proposal that the enemy is the enemy change how you see others?
- How has your understanding changed with regards to the hopelessness of the human race on its own against Sin, Death, and Satan?
- What did God reveal to you about how the enemy tries to hold you captive?

Talk 4: Rescued



What, if anything, has God done about it?

Pray for the graces of Wonder & Awe and Light.

“Holy Spirit, we want to see Jesus. We’re like those two Greeks that came to Philip in the Gospel of John asking that same question, we want to see Jesus. So open up our eyes and fill us anew with an understanding of what it is that he’s done for us. Expose Him now in a powerful way and in a good way, so that we may see that there’s no better choice, no more rational decision we can make than to entrust ourselves to Him who is at one and the same time so strong, so unconquerable and so gracious and loving. The greatest of generals, the Lord. We ask all this in Jesus’s Mighty Name, Amen”

Notes:

“I am the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades” Revelation 1:18

Holy Hour

Prayer prompts for your consideration:

“I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: ‘Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.’”

-Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 7

Ask yourself these questions in prayer:

- What portrayals of Jesus have shaped how I see Him?
- How does the story of Jesus as a warrior coming to rescue me change how I see him?
- Is the Holy Spirit revealing anything new to me about who Jesus is? How might I be called to respond to what is being revealed?

If you need inspiration for prayer, please consider:

- *Praying the Rosary*
- *Praying the chaplet of Divine Mercy*
- *Journaling on note pages of this booklet*
- *Reading the accounts of the Last Supper, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels starting at*
 - Matthew 26:20
 - Mark 14:17
 - Luke 22:14
 - John 13:1

Fr. Riccardo's Prayer of Surrender for Eucharistic Adoration:

"Come Holy Spirit, and flood my soul with the love of the Father and convince me that I matter, that I'm worth the trouble and that in God's eyes I'm worth dying for.

"Jesus, I thank You for coming to rescue me from Sin, Death, Hell, and Satan. I surrender to You right now and invite you to be Lord over every area of my life.

"Father, I believe that out of Your infinite love You created me. I come before You, just as I am, with all my brokenness, wounds, and hurts. I am sorry for all the times I have believed in the enemy's lies that You are not a good Father and don't love me. I repent and ask You to forgive me for all of my sins."

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within Thy wounds, hide me.

Let me not be separated from Thee.

Defend me from the malignant enemy.

At the hour of my death, call me:

And bid me come to Thee.

That with Thy saints I may praise Thee forever and ever.

Amen.

Small Group Discussion

- Is there anything from my experience of prayer during Holy Hour I want to share?
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me right now?
- How does the story of Jesus as a warrior coming to rescue me change how I see Him, myself and others?
- How does the story of Jesus as a warrior help me to better understand what it means to be a man?
- How does this understanding of Jesus as both warrior and Savior inspire me or change how I, as a man, rely on Him?
- What virtues do I need to strengthen in order to be the kind of man Jesus is? The virtues below, called by both classic and modern names, are a good place to start your discussion.
 - Cardinal Virtues
 - Prudence or Wisdom
 - Fortitude or Courage
 - Justice
 - Temperance or Moderation or Self-Discipline
 - Theological Virtues
 - Faith
 - Hope
 - Charity or Love

Talk 5: Response



How should I respond?

Pray for the grace of Magnanimity.

“Father, as we’ve considered all that you have done for us in creating us and sending your Son so as to reveal who you are to us and to make atonement, to go to war, to rescue us from our only enemy and from the powers of sin and death, we ask now that you would fall in fire upon us, the fire of your spirit, to awaken within us an ever-greater understanding of what it is that you send us out into this world, that you love so dearly, to do. And all this, we ask in Jesus’s name, Amen.”

Notes:

“Enemy occupied territory – that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise. He calls us all to engage in a great campaign of sabotage.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Small Group Discussion

- Has your understanding of the mission of the disciple changed? How? Why?
- Which mission(s) speaks the most to you? Why?
- As we leave here, how might God be inviting you to write the next chapter of His story?

The Mission of a Disciple

1. Hopeful Lamentation
2. Redemptive Suffering
3. Sabotage & Resistance
4. Re-creation
5. Restoration
6. Reconciliation
7. Healing
8. Ambassadors

Prayer for the Mission:

“O God, in the covenant of your Christ, you never cease to gather to yourself from all nations a people growing together in unity through the Spirit; grant, we pray, that your Church, faithful to the mission entrusted to her, may continually go forward with the human family and always be the leaven and the soul of human society, to renew it in Christ and transform it into the family of God.” The Roman Missal

Your Home: Where the Church Meets the World



Small Group Discussion:

- What does your home say or reveal about you?
- Is Jesus the Lord of your home? What other 'lords' of your home might He be competing with?
- Where in your home can you add physical reminders of your Catholic faith? Reminders can include:
 - Crucifixes
 - Holy water fonts
 - Statues
 - Icons

Remember, it is not the quantity of items but their beauty and placement that inspire prayer and devotion to God.

- How do you feel about using your home and potentially making changes to it to serve the mission of evangelization? Why do you feel that way?
- How comfortable are you inviting others to pray with you, leading prayer, and praying for others out loud?
- How could men help one another in fulfilling the mission of making the home the place where the world encounters the Church?
- If you live with others, how comfortable would they be with this mission? What could you do to help them to freely join them in this mission, too?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Retreat

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,

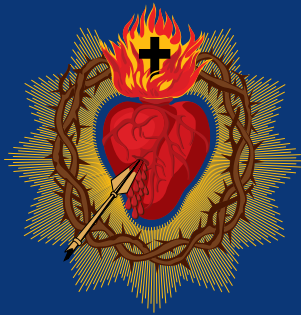
So that, as brothers in Christ,

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.



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The Heart of Our Mission



For more information about this retreat,
please visit kofc.org/gospel

