

# Definition of Some Spiritual Practices

(from "The Pocket Catholic Dictionary", by Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J.)

## **ACT OF CONTRITION:**

A free decision involving a detestation of, and grief for, sins committed and also a determination not to sin again. A valid contrition is internal, supernatural, universal and sovereign.

## **ANGELUS:**

Devotion in honor of the Incarnation, commemorating the Archangel Gabriel's annunciation to the Blessed Virgin. Recited approximately at 6 AM, noon, and 6 PM. The prayer begins with a remembrance of the words of Gabriel -- "The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary."

## **ASPIRATIONS:**

Short, formalized prayers of about a dozen words. Their purpose being to help one maintain a spirit of recollection in God's presence during the day.

## **GENERAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:**

Prayerful daily periodic examination of one's conscience to determine what faults have been committed which call for repentance and what good actions were performed for which God should be thanked.

## **GOSPEL READINGS:**

Readings from one of the four authentic accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which the Church teaches have been divinely inspired. These four accounts are the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John found in the New Testament.

## **HOLY COMMUNION:**

Also called the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the Sacrament that preserve the soul's union with God. The Eucharist is Christ's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the physical appearances of bread or wine.

## **HOLY MASS:**

The Mass is a sacred banquet or paschal meal. The sacrifice of the Eucharist is the central act of worship of the Catholic Church. The Mass is a re-presentation of Calvary, it is a memorial and an effective application of the merits gained by Christ.

## **HOLY ROSARY:**

A devotional prayer, mental or vocal, honoring the Blessed Mother of God.

## **MENTAL PRAYER:**

The form of prayer in which the sentiments expressed are one's own, and the expression of these sentiments is mainly internal, accomplished through simple meditation or contemplation.

**MORNING OFFERING:**

Prayer of dedication of one's entire day to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, normally said in the morning after waking from sleep.

**MORTIFICATIONS:**

The practice of Christian asceticism (spiritual effort in the pursuit of virtue) in order to overcome sin and master sinful tendencies, and through penance and austerity to strengthen the will in the practice of virtue and grow in the likeness of Christ, e.g. self-denial.

**PERSONAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:**

Reflection in God's presence on the state of one's soul. Can be used to help overcome a particular bad habit or to strengthen a virtue.

**PRAYER TO GUARDIAN ANGEL:**

Prayers to the celestial spirit assigned by God to watch over each individual during life. The role of the guardian angel is to both guide (as a messenger of God's will to our minds) and to guard (as an instrument of God's goodness in protecting us from evil).

**SPIRITUAL READING:**

All reading that is conducive to prayer and closer union with God. Readings that enlighten the mind and inspire the will and affection to the worship and service of God.

**USE OF HOLY WATER:**

Blessed water is a symbol of spiritual cleansing. Its use is advised in moments of physical danger and against temptations from spiritual enemies.

**VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:**

Time spent adoring Christ either in the tabernacle or exposed in a monstrance on the altar. The Eucharist is not only a Sacrament to be received, but it is also a Sacrament to be adored before, during, and after reception. It is a permanent Sacrament since Christ remains in the Eucharist as long as the physical properties of the bread or wine remain essentially unchanged.

**WEARING OF THE SCAPULAR:**

The scapular symbolized the yoke of Christ. The Church has approved 18 different scapulars. One of the most common scapulars, the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, comes with the promise that whoever dies faithfully wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire.