

## ST. JOSEMARIA INSTITUTE GUIDE FOR MAKING A SPIRITUAL RETREAT

A retreat is a time of quiet reflection and prayer, away from the daily routine, to examine one's life in the presence of Jesus Christ: to see what is going well, to see what needs to change, to make resolutions and to begin again.

Throughout his priestly life, St. Josemaria Escriva preached many spiritual retreats to men, women, university students, priests and seminarians. He encouraged all who sought to have a deeper relationship with God to set apart a few days a year for a spiritual retreat.

Inspired by St. Josemaria, the St. Josemaria Institute offers collections of meditations preached by priests of Opus Dei to help guide your time on retreat. The meditations help to offer points for reflection and conversation with God and to deepen the interior life. And, in this guide, we offer suggestions for how to listen to the audio retreats and how to prepare to make a retreat on your own.

### HOW DO I PREPARE TO MAKE A SPIRITUAL RETREAT?

1. **Make Time:** Set apart specific days to make the retreat. When possible, two or three consecutive days is ideal.
2. **Make a Schedule:** Set consistent times each day to listen to the meditations - two or three meditations per day.
3. **Find a Space:** Choose a space with minimal distractions for the retreat. You might consider going to a retreat center or church to listen to the meditations; or, you may consider creating a sacred space in your home or finding a quiet place in nature.
4. **Keep a Journal:** Write down moments from the meditations that strike you, as well as the thoughts, inspirations, and resolutions that arise from your prayer and reflection.
5. **Strive to Keep Silence:** A retreat requires interior silence and exterior silence, which helps us maintain a lasting conversation with God.
6. **Spiritual Practice:** As a supplement to the retreat meditations, it is suggested each day to incorporate an additional spiritual practice: attend Mass, read and meditate on the Gospel, pray the Rosary, go to confession, etc.

### HOW DO I LISTEN TO THE RECORDINGS AND ORGANIZE MY TIME?

1. **Play the first meditation:** Listen to the opening prayer and place yourself in the presence of God. As you listen, take notes. By taking notes, you will know the theme of the meditation, you will cut down on distractions, and you will stay on track.

2. **Reflect:** When the meditation ends, take about 10 – 15 minutes to look over your notes and think about what God is saying to you: Are there things you could work on to deepen your love for him? Are there concrete things about which you can make a resolution? Jot those down.
3. **Play the remaining meditations in the retreat:** Work through each meditation in the same way as step two and three.
4. **Take your time:** Try not to listen to the meditations back-to-back. Remember to make time throughout each day for additional spiritual practices (see no. 6 above), meals, and daily exercise.
5. **Examine:** End each day of the retreat by making an Examination of Conscience.

## HOW SHOULD I CONCLUDE THE RETREAT?

Come away from this retreat with profound gratitude for what our Lord has done for you and make two or three concrete resolutions that you can give our Lord following the retreat.

When you conclude the retreat, remember that the themes addressed should continue to offer inspiration as you progress in your spiritual life. Perhaps once a week or once a month, review your notes and resolutions from the retreat in your time of personal prayer.

If you take this sacred time seriously, with the help of the Holy Trinity and our Blessed Mother, you will find yourself progressing deeper into your interior life.



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