

## Unity of Life/Plan of Life

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.” (Ephesians 5:15-16).

### Unity of Life

What is unity of life? Only meaningful for anyone who wants to grow in their spiritual life or get closer to Christ. It is a constant effort to grow and act on our faith in all that we think, say and do.

Achieving unity of life is the task of a lifetime. Fundamental: grow in love of God so that every word, thought and deed is done for love.

Nourish our prayer through the incidents and contradictions of the day (how do you deal with sickness, child's misbehavior, sudden misfortunes etc) – in a word the normal contradictions of life.

Examine the slightest manifestation of living “double life.” Public activity in keeping with faith. Mario Cuomo vs. Bob Casey. Duty to form the conscience well.

Intellectual integrity: no giving in to human respects but carry out the teachings of Christ in public places. For example: pro-life and moral issues, gay marriage, pre-marital sex, etc. Both JFK and Churchill quoted Dante's Divine Comedy: **the hottest place in hell is reserved for those who in times of great moral crisis maintained their neutrality.**

Ultimately, living a Unity of Life is being a witness: story of Mabel in 1860's Birmingham England... Very few remember her, except one of the sons is JRR Tolkien. “My catholic faith nourished me and taught me all the little I know, and that I owe my mother, who clung to her conversion and died young,

largely through hardships of poverty resulting from it.” Being a witness and living our conviction.

Let us take a good honest look at our own lives. How is it that sometimes we just can't find those few minutes it would take to finish lovingly the work we have to do, which is the very means of our sanctification? Why do we neglect our family duties? Why that tendency to rush through our prayers, or through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? How are we so lacking in calm and serenity when it comes to fulfilling the duties of our state, and yet so unhurried as we indulge in our own whims? You might say these are trifling matters. You're right, they are, but these trifles are the oil, the fuel we need to keep our flame alive and our light shining. “ (Friends of God, St. Josemaria Escriva).

St. Francis: preach the gospel, use words if necessary.

### Essential tools for A Plan of Life

This means that we need to invest the limited amount of time we have each day (24 hrs, 1,440 min) in activities that are worthwhile. To do that, to be motivated, we need to first find the purpose in all that we do.

#### Begin with the End in Mind

In Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.*, he advocated doing things with the end in mind. The end represents the purpose of your life. Until you can say what that purpose is with assurance, then you just cannot direct your life in the manner that would bring you the greatest meaning and purpose.

Until you have decided that holiness is worth pursuing in life, you will be unable to effectively work on with purpose which provides a basic framework for you to re-align all your efforts so that you will ultimately achieve unity of life.

In order to slowly achieve unity of life, it is critical to craft a Plan of Life (POL). Tools for the trade: stethoscope for doctors, test tubes for biotech, so POL for wannabe saints.

One of the first things is to be humble. Humility to realize that we need God in our daily life. Daily, we need to multiply time through living the presence of God and so having more serenity and intensity in work. This calls for the need of a spiritual plan of life.

Here is a classic daily program of spiritual exercise that will help us define the purpose and helps bring holiness to our hectic life: **i. the morning offering, ii. Spiritual reading, iii. the Rosary, iv. Holy Mass and Communion (story of Noah Lett and St. Bernadette), v. least fifteen minutes of mental prayer, the vi recitation of the Angelus at noon, and vii. a brief examination of conscience at night.**

Overall time allocations	
Habit	Time (min)
1. Morning Offering	1
2. Silent Prayer	15
3. Spiritual Reading	15
4. Daily Mass	30
5. Angelus	2
6. Rosary	20
7.EOC	2
Total Time	85 (1 hr 25min)

There are various ways to come to know Jesus. You want to come to know, love and serve Jesus the same way you learn to love and stay in love with anybody: your wife, family members, and close friends, i.e. by spending a considerable amount of time with him on a regular and, in this case, daily basis. There are no easy substitutes.

The first habit is the morning offering, when you kneel down and using your own words, or a formula, you briefly offer up all the day ahead for God's glory. **"Conquer yourself each day from the very first moment, getting up on the dot, at a set time, without granting a single minute to laziness. If with the help of God, you conquer yourself in the moment, you have accomplished a great deal for the rest of the day. It's so discouraging to find yourself beaten in the first skirmish (The Way, 191).** Those who can live the "heroic moment" in the morning and in the evening going to bed on time will have both the physical and spiritual energy throughout the day to stop what they are doing in order to live the other habits.

### Daily Mass/Prayer

The first and last thought of each day should often refer explicitly to the Lord in the

Eucharist: a thought of love, gratitude, or contrition, which we can then repeat throughout the night if we should wake up. Insomnia? Use it as an opportunity to go to Our Lord in the tabernacle and accompany him.

As Paul puts it: "We are transfigured into his likeness, from splendor to splendor." We become like that which we gaze upon. Looking into a sunset, the face takes on a golden glow. Looking at the Eucharistic Lord for an hour transforms the heart in a mysterious way as the face of Moses was transformed after his companionship with God on the mountain. Something happens to us similar to that which happened to the disciples at Emmaus. On Easter Sunday afternoon when the Lord met them, he asked why they were so gloomy. After spending some time in his presence, and hearing again the secret of spirituality - "The Son of Man must suffer to enter into his Glory" - their time with him ended and their "hearts were on fire." (Fulton Sheen)

Let us meditate on some other words of St. Josemaria: *Where did St. Paul get all his strength from? Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat! (Phil 4:13). I can do all things, because God alone gives me this faith, this hope, this charity. I find it very hard to believe in the supernatural effectiveness of an apostolate that is not based, is not solidly centered, on a life of constant conversation with our Lord. Yes, right there in our work; in our own home, or in the street, with all the small or big problems that arise daily. Right there, not taken away from those things, but with our hearts fixed on God. Then our words, our actions—our defects!—will give forth the bonus odor Christi (2 Cor 2:5), the sweet fragrance of Christ, which others will inevitably notice and say: 'Here is a Christian.'*

### The Whole Purpose

The final lines of Leon Bloy's classic novel, The Woman Who Was Poor:

**There is only one misery and that is – not to be saints.**