

"FIVE ALIVE" PRACTICES *for Adults*



Catholic tradition gives us many ways to enkindle and renew the fire of eucharistic devotion, and there are five practices that I want to share with you. These "five alive" practices will help us to come truly alive in the Mass! — Bishop David L. Ricken

1. THE MASS

For most Catholics, our primary contact with the life of our parishes will be at Sunday Mass. It's an important obligation and our opportunity to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. Regular Mass attendance strengthens our faith through the Scriptures, the Creed, other prayers, sacred music, the homily, receiving Communion and being part of a faith community.

We must not look upon Sunday simply as a day of obligation but as a day to celebrate the resurrection with joy! Bridging the gap between Mass and a life of discipleship means connecting Sunday to our everyday life. We must always celebrate Sunday Eucharist with the joy of Christ whom we encounter as the one who loves and saves us!



LIVING IT OUT:

- If you have missed Sunday Mass, please bring this to confession before your next Sunday Mass, and make it a point to try and attend each Sunday.
- Try increasing your Mass attendance by even one Mass a week for a time, then add another one. It can be a very different experience — quieter and more focused. You will be amazed at how your desire for Jesus increases!
- Invite someone to Mass — a personal invitation can make all the difference to someone who has drifted from the faith or feels alienated from the Church.

2. LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio divina means "divine reading" or "spiritual reading," and it's a way of reflecting on the Scriptures. The Bible offers access to the word of God and tells the story of human salvation. Through the *lectio divina* process, we learn to listen to God, hear the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts and find out what God wants to say to us.



LIVING IT OUT: Spend some time by yourself, with a family member, or a friend, and pray through the upcoming Sunday's Gospel using the *lectio divina* process:

1. **Lectio (Reading)** — Read the word of God, slowly and reflectively so that it can take root in us. Allow the words and or verses to capture your heart as God speaks to your heart.
2. **Meditatio (Reflection)** — Think about the text and ponder it in your heart so you can receive what God wants to give you. Imagine yourself at the scene, images, sounds and thoughts all come to mind to draw you even more deeply into the Scripture passage.
3. **Oratio (Response)** — Leave your thinking aside and simply let your heart speak to God. By reflecting on the word of God, this stage moves you to a prayerful response to the Lord.
4. **Contemplatio (Rest)** — Let go of your own ideas, plans and meditations and simply rest in the word of God, a holy rest which renews and sustains us. Through this phase your attention is centered on God, and you allow him to refresh and restore you for a new beginning.

3. EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Eucharistic Adoration is an extension of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which occurs in every Mass: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." Many people wonder what to do in Adoration, and the word of God gives us the answer. In the psalms, we are urged to "be still and know that I am God." What is important is that you are here. Give yourself the gift of peace and quiet with the King of Peace in Eucharistic Adoration. Bring your deepest desires to the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration, he is waiting for you.



LIVING IT OUT:

- Make occasional (or regular) visits to the tabernacle in your parish, where the Eucharist is reserved and Jesus remains truly present.
- Find a time when your parish holds a Holy Hour and try to attend, even if it's for 15 minutes. You can build from there and aim to stay longer as you become more familiar and comfortable with this prayer practice.
- My desire is that, through the gift of our Eucharistic Adoration chapels, there would be prayers offered for an increase of vocations every hour of every day. Vocations, especially to the priesthood, are coming from areas where the faithful gather around the Eucharist in perpetual prayer, I am calling for a renewed commitment from our Eucharistic Adoration chapels to be open and available to all!

4. CONFESSION

The sacrament of reconciliation contains the elements of conversion, confession and celebration. It is this sacrament which changes us, challenges us and equips us as disciples of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Confession urges us to turn back to God, express our sorrow for falling short and open our lives to the power of God's healing grace. This sacrament forgives the injuries of the past and provides strength for the future.



LIVING IT OUT:

- If you have not been in some time, please do not be afraid. The Lord is waiting for you in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- All Catholics are obligated to go once a year, and Advent and Lent are particularly important times to go to confession. If you go a couple of times a year, consider going more frequently. Like going to Mass, we can find strength and grow deeper in faith through participation in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

5. THE ROSARY

The rosary is a Scripture-based prayer that was given to us by the Blessed Virgin Mary and helps us reflect on moments from Jesus' life. When you ask Mary something, she always answers. In my experience, it wasn't always what I thought or what I'd hoped, but almost always it was better than what I had asked for! Praying the rosary is a powerful way to restore order to your own spiritual life and a great booster to the quality of the spiritual life in the home when the entire family prays together.



LIVING IT OUT:

- If you don't know how to pray the rosary or it's been a while, start by familiarizing yourself with the basic prayers: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be
- Try praying the rosary individually or with your family or small group. Are there good times throughout the week when you can do this?
- Share this beautiful prayer form with others, especially those who do not know the basic meaning of the rosary or how to pray it.