



QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS FOR USE WITH THE CD SET ***SPIRITUAL WORKOUT OF A FORMER SAINT*** ***Updated and Expanded Edition***

(These can be used by individuals and/or small men's groups.)

FROM CD#1 – INTRODUCTION

One: Give a brief synopsis of what your life was like growing up; use my story in the introduction as a guide. I want you to talk about your childhood, teenage life, young adult and adult life.

Two: Did you have a conversion experience in your life? Explain.

Three: The door to our heart is very different because it only has a door knob on the inside. Have you opened up the door to your heart and allowed Jesus to be the center of your life? If so, explain how this happened. Has this been a continuing experience?

Four: If He is not the center of your life, what are some of the ongoing obstacles that prevent you from doing this?

FROM CD#1 – STEP ONE: GET THE HOLY SPIRIT AS YOUR PERSONAL TRAINER

One: Prior to Pentecost, the Apostles were scared to death. What happened at Pentecost to change that? What happened to this band of cowards once their personal, spiritual trainer came into their lives?

Two: Do you see a need to have the Holy Spirit as your divine, spiritual trainer? Why do you think this is important? If no, what makes you think that you don't need Him?

Three: Do you think that the gift of the Holy Spirit was intended for only a chosen few? Imagine what God can do in your life if you allow Him. How can you enlist the help of the Holy Spirit in the events of your daily life?

(The following questions are pertaining to your *earthly* spiritual director.)

Four: What is the object of spiritual direction?

Five: Saint Ignatius of Loyola talks about two-fold dynamic movements of Christian Spiritual Life. How does spiritual direction help the person work his way through these movements?

Six: Who is a person that you would choose as your spiritual director? Give some reasons why you would choose this person.

FROM CD#2 – STEP TWO: SCOUT THE ENEMIES OF YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

One: We have to take a good, hard, long look at ourselves. Here we go: What are your talents? What do you like to do? What do you do because you think it will win your acceptance with others? How true are you to the commitments you have made in your life? Are you a good husband to your wife? How could you be better? Are you a good father to your children? How could you be better? Are you a good son to your parents? How could you be better? And finally, what are your strengths and weaknesses?

Two: Offensive scouting report: Who's calling your plays? What motivates you? What is the main goal of your life?

Three: What are your priorities in life? How much time each day do you spend on the physical and intellectual parts of your life (which you know for certain, will end upon death)? How much time each day do you spend on the spiritual part of your life (which Jesus assured us will last us forever)?

Four: What are the obstacles that we are likely to encounter in our pursuit to follow Jesus Christ in our life? What keeps us from focusing on the most important part of our life? What can you do to change that pattern? Do you have a spiritual workout game plan?

FROM CD#2 – STEP THREE: STRETCH OUT IN PRAYER

One: Prayer is the beginning and the key to a successful spiritual workout plan. Without a daily prayer life, you don't stand a chance to succeed. What does prayer mean to you? Explain. Do you pray on a consistent basis? When, where, and how long? If not, why?

Two: Scripture tells us that Jesus prayed often. Do you believe that prayer should be an essential part of our lives? Why or why not?

Three: What are the four steps of stretching out in prayer? Explain each.

Four: Name some of the objectives pertaining to a fruitful prayer life.

Five: What are some resources that are available to help us with our prayer lives?

FROM CD#3 – STEP FOUR: RUN AWAY FROM TEMPTAION

One: Saint Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* tells us that pride is the mother and root of every sin – including mortal sin. The devil uses pride/ego to trap many men. Please take some time to answer the following questions covering the four categories below.

Personal – Men, do you think that the spiritual part of your life is important? Why? Does your day-to-day behavior display the importance of the spiritual life? Men, do you attend Sunday Mass or do you think it's more for women and weak people?

Family – Men, do you believe that you should be the spiritual head of the family or do you leave that role to your wife? Men, do you believe that “the family that prays together stays together,”¹ or do you think that this is just an old cliché? Dads, do you realize that your son loves mom but wants to be like dad and that your example is important? Do you believe that it won't make any difference in the future spiritual life of your children (especially the boys) whether you participate now in the spiritual life of your family?

Country – Men, do you realize that either by law or free choice we have allowed the following things to occur: more than 1 million babies a year are aborted in the United States; our children are not permitted to pray in our public school or sporting events; some people are trying to remove “Under God” from the pledge of allegiance; there is a movement to legalize same sex marriage (in fact, six states have already approved it)?

Church – Men, do you realize that many Catholics support legalized abortion? Comment on your belief. Men, do you believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist? Men, do you believe that if you are aware of having committed a mortal sin, you can't receive Holy Communion until you have confessed your sin in the sacrament of Reconciliation? Comment on your answer.

Two: The devil used booze and ego to entice me to sin. What are some of the tactics and devices that the devil uses against you to tempt you to sin?

Three: Don't lose hope. We must run to Jesus for help. What is the six-point game plan to help us overcome temptation and sin? Give a short explanation for each.

Four: Jesus instituted the Sacraments of Confession and Penance because he knew we would stumble and fall on occasion; but, he gave us a reason to get back up. Do you go to confession? How often? If not, why? How do you prepare yourself before going to confession? And, how do you feel once you have completed your confession?

¹ Famous quote by Fr. Patrick Peyton, father of the Family Rosary Crusade

FROM CD#3 – STEP FIVE: LIFTING UP OTHERS

One: Our society has become so negative – wanting to tear things down rather than build things up. Just watch the evening news or get on the internet. We must overcome this negativity with a positive attitude. What are some of the ways that we could lift up the following family members: spouses, children, parents, and elderly parents?

Two: What are some of the ways we could lift up the following groups: relatives, friends, and co-workers?

Three: During this very difficult time for the Church, what are some of the ways we could lift up these groups: priests, religious, and the Church?

Four: How do we lift up our enemies? How does forgiveness play a major role in mending these relationships?

Five: Do you have unforgiveness in your heart? Define. Now would be a good time to take a prayer break and invite Jesus into that situation for inner healing.

FROM CD#4 – STEP SIX: RECEIVE YOUR SPIRITUAL NUTRITION

EUCCHARIST

One: Why do you think Jesus Christ suffered, died, was buried, descended into hell, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven? How is this connected to the Mass? What does Jesus say about the Eucharist in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel? What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about the Eucharist?

Two: Since Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday for all of us personally, how often do you think Jesus would like for us to receive him Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity? What prevents us from receiving the Eucharist more often? Oh yeah, do you really believe in the Real Presence?

WORD

Three: The Liturgy of the Mass displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity. What does the *Catechism* say makes up these parts?

Four: What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in paragraphs 134 -140 teach us about Sacred Scripture?

Five: I have people tell me that they get nothing out of Mass. My answer to them is, “what do you put into it?” How do you prepare yourself for Mass? Do you personally go over the readings prior to attending Mass? Do you go over them with your family?

Six: What do you think are the benefits of spending quite time before the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration?

Seven: What is our Spiritual playbook? What is our Catholic spiritual game plan?

FROM CD#4 – STEP SEVEN: REST IN THE SPIRIT

One: Give a rundown of your activities – from start to finish – in a typical day for you. What do you think of it? What can you adjust in your daily schedule that can free up some time for the Lord?

Two: How much time and attention do you give to the Lord? How often do you think of Him? Do you ask for His guidance in your personal, business, and social matters? In what way? If no, why not?

Three: What are some of the steps that will help you rest in the Spirit?

Four: What are various ways that God may choose to speak to you? Cite an occasion when God spoke to you.

Five: What are some various things that you can eliminate in your home to give you and your family more quite time?

FROM CD#5 – STEP EIGHT: MAKE AN ACTION PLAN (CROSSING THE GOAL)

One: Take some time and design your own individual, spiritual fitness action plan. For reference, you can utilize my personal sample that is in the book.

Two: Men need to be in Christian fellowship with one another so they can continue to grow seriously with the help of brothers. I have been in a small group for 25 years. What do you think are the advantages to belonging to a spiritual fitness workout group? If you have been participating in small groups for a while, please share some experiences you have encountered that have been beneficial and your spiritual growth.

Three: Think of some of your friends and men in your parish that you would like to see join a small group. What is the best way of inviting them to join? Would you like to organize a group in your parish? If so, contact *Crossing the Goal* at our website: www.crossingthegoal.com.

FROM CD#5 – STEP NINE: ARE YOU READY?

One: If that were you lying on the table, are you ready? Give reasons for yes or no.

Two: Why wasn't I afraid to die? What are some of the things you could do NOW that will give you more peace when your time is up?

Three: Would you be interested in becoming a member of Crossing the Goal team? The Church needs more spiritually tough men to stand up and be counted. The requirements for a Crossing the Goal team members (CTGT) are:

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to be your personal, spiritual trainer.
2. Pray daily for a minimum of 10-15 minutes and then keep building on it.
3. Do a short examination of conscience each night before going to bed.
4. Go to confession monthly.
5. Got to Mass on Sunday and two other times during the week. Go to Eucharistic Adoration once a week, if you can't make a weekday Mass.
6. Read the readings before attending Mass on Sundays.
7. Commit to having a positive attitude at home, work, and with friends.
8. Pray for other men.
9. Join or start a Catholic men's small prayer group.

Finally, if we want to change the direction which this country is headed, if we want to protect marriages, if we want more priests, if we want to strengthen the Catholic Church, if we want to defend life, then we must touch the hearts of men through the power of the Holy Spirit, our personal trainer.