FIELD MANUAL · NO. I

The Catholic Man's Rule of Life

A Seven-Day Field Manual

ALTAR. ARMS. ALLEGIANCE.

1765 SANCTUM CO.



A WORD BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This is not a pamphlet.
It is a field manual.

The Catholic Church has handed down a set of daily practices that have formed every kind of man — soldier, farmer, clerk, king. The disciplines in these pages are not invented. They are not new. They are not yours to negotiate. They were kept by men in monasteries and in foxholes, in trial and in marriage, in success and in disgrace, and the Church has raised saints from among the men who kept them.

This manual gives you seven disciplines, plain. One per day. By the end of the week you will have practiced each at least once. By the end of the month, if you continue, you will have a rule of life — the operating system of a Catholic man.

The Sanctum makes no claim to invent these practices. They are the inheritance of every Catholic man who came before you. Our work is only to set them down clearly enough for you to begin — and to give you, in the back of this book, a way to keep them: a thirty-day tracker to hang where you will see it, and a card to cut out and carry.

Read the day. Do the practice. Pray the prayer. Mark it done.

Start tonight.

DEUS VULT.
— The Sanctum

THE RULE

Seven Disciplines.
Seven Days. One Man, Re-Forged.

Each discipline below is a practice the Church has handed down, and a virtue it forges in the man who keeps it. Walk one a day this week. Then keep the ones that take.

I	The Examen	*— honesty — three minutes a night*
II	The Mass	*— reverence — the source & summit*
III	The Rosary	*— perseverance — the weapon in your pocket*
IV	Confession	*— humility — monthly, without exception*
V	The Friday Fast	*— temperance — the Friday discipline*
VI	Hidden Almsgiving	*— charity — the alms no one sees*
VII	Spiritual Reading	*— wisdom — drink from the well*

Keep one, and you have begun. Keep three, and you have a rule. Keep all seven, and you are living the rule the Church holds out to every man.

The Examen

Three minutes to look honestly at the other twenty-three hours.



Three minutes a night. Honestly. Without flinching.

The Examen is the daily review St. Ignatius of Loyola set down in his Spiritual Exercises (§43) — not because God needs to be told what we did, but because a man who never looks at his day never learns from it, and a man who does not learn cannot grow holy.

THE FIVE MOVEMENTS

1. Gratitude. Name three concrete gifts of the day. Not abstractions — the hot coffee, the call from your brother, the drive home with no traffic.
2. Petition. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the day as God saw it, not as you remember it.
3. Review. Walk the day, morning to night. Note where God was close, and where you turned from Him.
4. Confession. Where did you fail? The angry word. The lustful glance. The neglect of your wife or children. Do not soften it. Name it.
5. Resolution. Ask one specific grace for tomorrow. Not "make me holy" — "help me hold my temper when the day goes sideways."

Close with the Our Father.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

What did I do today that I would not want my son to see me do?

☐ I kept the Examen tonight.

Sources: St. Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises §43; Catechism §§2729–2730 (distraction and vigilance in prayer).

The Mass

The summit your week is built on — or it is not.



The source and the summit. Everything else flows from here.

The Catechism says it plain: the Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (CCC §1324). Not a metaphor. The bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Christ at the words of consecration (CCC §1376). Sunday Mass is the minimum. The Church teaches that those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin (CCC §2181). Daily Mass is the discipline of men who have realized what happens on that altar. You are probably not a daily-Mass man yet. Start.

THE PRACTICE

This week, attend one weekday Mass — not a Sunday. A 6:30 a.m. before work, a 12:10 at lunch, a chapel Mass before duty. If you truly cannot get to one, make a spiritual communion:

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION · AFTER ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

If I truly believed the Eucharist was the Body of Christ, how would my week be different?

☐ I went to a weekday Mass — or made a spiritual communion.

Sources: Catechism §§1324–1327, 1376, 2181; St. Alphonsus Liguori, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament; Pope St. John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia (2003).

The Rosary

The weapon in your pocket.



One decade tonight. Build to the full five by month's end.

At Lepanto on October 7, 1571, the fleet of the Holy League defeated the Ottoman fleet. That same year Pope St. Pius V instituted a feast of Our Lady of Victory on October 7 in commemoration of the victory. In 1573 Pope Gregory XIII made it the feast of the Holy Rosary. Today the Church keeps the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7. In a Korean War prison camp, Father Emil Kapaun counted the Rosary among his favorite prayers. A man with a Rosary in his pocket cannot be unarmed.

THE PRACTICE — ONE DECADE

Sign of the Cross. Announce the mystery (Mon & Sat: Joyful · Tue & Fri: Sorrowful · Wed & Sun: Glorious · Thu: Luminous). Then one Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory Be, and the Fatima prayer.

THE DECADE, IN FULL

Our Father — who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary — full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be · O My Jesus — Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit... O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy. Amen.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

Whose name do I want carried up to Our Lady tonight?

☐ I prayed at least one decade today.

Sources: Pope St. Pius V, Consueverunt Romani Pontifices (1569); Pope St. John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae §38 (2002); Catechism §971; Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), "Victory, Feast of Our Lady of"; USCCB, Liturgical Calendar 2026 (Oct 7); Diocese of Wichita, Father Emil Kapaun (2016).

Confession

The sacrament a man must not bury.



Monthly. Without exception. Whether the list is heavy or light.

The Catechism is clear: anyone aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion without first receiving sacramental absolution, "unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession" (CCC §1457). The Church's precept binds the faithful to confess their serious sins at least once a year (CCC §§1457, 2042). The Church also strongly recommends confessing everyday faults, because it helps a man fight his bad habits and grow (CCC §1458). Saints have asked far more of their spiritual sons. St. Pio of Pietrelcina, who, in the words of Pope St. Paul VI, "heard confessions from dawn to dusk," wanted his penitents back often. One of his spiritual sons, Pietro Cugino, recalled: "He wanted me to go to confession every eight days." Monthly is the discipline this manual asks of you: a sound baseline for a man starting out, well above the Church's minimum.

THE PRACTICE

Find the confession times at the nearest parish this week, and go. If it has been years, say exactly that to the priest. He is there as the sign and instrument of God's merciful love for the sinner (CCC §1465), and he will help you. The free Examination of Conscience at 1765sanctumco.com/examination/ will walk you through it.

ACT OF CONTRITION · PRAY IT BEFORE YOU GO

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

What sin have I been getting accustomed to?

- ☐ I have set a date for confession this month: _____

Sources: Catechism §§1422–1498 (esp. 1457, 1458, 1465), 2042; Code of Canon Law, cann. 959–991; Vatican biography of St. Pio of Pietrelcina (2002), quoting Pope St. Paul VI; Avvenire, Feb 24, 2024, quoting Il Settimanale di Padre Pio (testimony of Pietro Cugino; our translation).

DAY FIVE · THE VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE

The Friday Fast

He died on a Friday. The Catholic remembers it in his body.



Pick one penance. Keep it every Friday. Tell no one.

The Church keeps every Friday as a day of penance in memory of the death of Christ (CCC §§1438, 2043). Canon law says it plainly: "The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent" (can. 1250). In 1966 the U.S. bishops allowed Catholics to substitute another penance for abstinence from meat on Fridays outside Lent. They lifted the obligation of abstinence from meat on those Fridays, but not the penitential character of Friday: "Friday itself remains a special day of penitential observance throughout the year" (NCCB 1966, no. 22).

THE PRACTICE — CHOOSE ONE, AND KEEP IT

1 Abstain from meat. The classical form. No flesh meat; fish, eggs, and dairy are permitted. The point is the deliberate denial, not the menu.

2 Fast. One full meal, two smaller that together don't equal it, nothing between — the Ash Wednesday rule, kept on Fridays.

3 A specific denial. No alcohol that day. No screens after dinner. A cold shower. Whatever your weakness is — deny it for one day.

Tell no one you are doing it. (See Day Six.)

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

Where am I soft? Pick the practice that hits there.

☐ My Friday penance, chosen and kept: _____

Sources: Catechism §§1438, 2043; Code of Canon Law, cann. 1249–1253; NCCB (now USCCB), Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence (1966), nos. 22–25; USCCB, Fast & Abstinence; USCCB, What is Lent? (Fasting and Abstinence Q&A).

DAY SIX · THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY

Hidden Almsgiving

The alms Christ asks no one else to see.



Give one alms this week that no one but God will know.

MATTHEW 6:1–4 · DOUAY-RHEIMS

Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.

Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms of penance: fasting, prayer and almsgiving (CCC §1434). And Christ Himself says of the man who gives to be seen: "they have received their reward" (Matthew 6:2). The discipline is not the giving. The discipline is the hiddenness of it.

THE PRACTICE

- † Cash, anonymous, to a man you know is struggling — in an unmarked envelope, through someone else.
- † A gift to your parish or a Catholic charity, no deduction claimed, no receipt kept.
- † A need filled silently — the broken washer, the unpaid grocery bill, the back-rent on your block.

Do not announce it on Day Seven. Do not announce it on Day Seventy.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

Whom do I know is hurting that I have the means to help — and have not?

☐ I gave in secret this week.

Sources: Matthew 6:1–4 (Douay-Rheims); St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, Hom. 19; Catechism §§1434, 2447, 2462.

DAY SEVEN · THE VIRTUE OF WISDOM

Spiritual Reading

Twenty minutes a day. Drink from the well, not the algorithm.



"Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." — St. Jerome (CCC §133)

A man who does not read is being formed by something else — talk radio, the feed, the ambient noise of his century. The remedy is not more output; it is intake — daily, deliberate, from the right sources. The Church's discipline is lectio divina — "divine reading" — "where the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer" (CCC §1177). Twenty minutes. The phone in another room. The book open. You, alone.

THE WELL — PICK ONE, STAY THIRTY DAYS

Scripture (always first): the Gospel of Mark · the Psalms, one a day · the Acts of the Apostles.

The saints, by them — not about them: Augustine's Confessions · à Kempis, Imitation of Christ · de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life · Liguori, Preparation for Death.

The magisterium (free at vatican.va): the Catechism · Lumen Gentium · Humanae Vitae · Veritatis Splendor.

Do not spend these twenty minutes on the feed. Drink from the well — the Scriptures, the saints, the magisterium.

THE QUESTION TONIGHT

If a Catholic man in 1900 saw how I've spent my last twelve months of reading, would he recognize me as Catholic?

What I will read for the next 30 days: _____

Sources: St. Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah, Prologue (c. 408–410); the tradition of lectio divina; Catechism §§133, 1177, 2653.

KEEP THE RULE

The Thirty-Day Tracker

A week makes a start. Keep going for a month. Hang this where you will see it — the bathroom mirror, the inside of a closet door — and mark each discipline the day you keep it. Miss a day? Mark the next one. The goal is not a perfect grid. The goal is a formed man.

Discipline · Days 1–15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Examen (nightly)															
Mass / Spiritual Communion															
Rosary (≤ 1 decade)															
Confession (monthly ✝)															
Friday penance															
Hidden alms															
Spiritual reading (20 min)															

Discipline · Days 16–30	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Examen (nightly)															
Mass / Spiritual Communion															
Rosary (≤ 1 decade)															
Confession (monthly ✝)															
Friday penance															
Hidden alms															
Spiritual reading (20 min)															

Thirty days from tonight, look back at this grid and thank God for every mark on it.

CUT · FOLD · CARRY

The Carry Card

Cut along the dashed line and keep this in your wallet, your truck, your range bag, or behind your phone case. The whole rule, and the seven questions, on one card. When you forget what you are about — read it.

The Catholic Man's Rule of Life

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1. Examen — three minutes, every night. What would I not want my son to see?
2. Mass — Sunday without fail; a weekday when you can. Do I live like it's truly Him?
3. Rosary — one decade minimum, daily. Whose name do I carry up tonight?
4. Confession — monthly, without exception. What sin am I getting used to?
5. Friday penance — one denial, every Friday. Where am I soft?
6. Hidden alms — give where no one sees. Whom can I help, and haven't?
7. Reading — twenty minutes from the well. Would a Catholic of 1900 know me?

YOU HAVE WALKED SEVEN DISCIPLINES.

Fight well, brother.

Keep one, and you have begun. Keep three, and you have a rule. Keep all seven, and you are living the rule the Church holds out to every man. The Sanctum did not invent these. We are only the men handing them on.

The Sanctum Dispatch will keep showing you how — one reflection, one discipline, one action, every Sunday. It is free: join at 1765sanctumco.com/dispatch/.

Venerable Father Emil Kapaun, pray for us.
Servant of God Father Vincent Capodanno, pray for us.
Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds hide me. Permit me not to be separated from Thee. From the malicious enemy defend me. In the hour of my death call me, and bid me come unto Thee, that with Thy Saints I may praise Thee forever and ever. Amen.

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Deus Vult.
— The Sanctum

SOURCES & ATTRIBUTION

The disciplines are not original to the Sanctum. They are the inheritance of the whole Church. The sources for each day are listed below.

The Examen — St. Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises §43; Catechism §§2729–2730 (distraction and vigilance in prayer).

The Mass — Catechism §§1322–1419, 2181; Pope St. John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia (2003); St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae III, q.73–83.

The Rosary — Pope St. Pius V, Consueverunt Romani Pontifices (1569); Pope St. John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae §38 (2002); Catechism §§971, 2678; Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), "Victory, Feast of Our Lady of"; USCCB, Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America 2026 (October 7); Diocese of Wichita, Father Emil Kapaun (booklet, 2016).

Confession — Catechism §§1422–1498 (esp. 1457, 1458, 1465), 2042; Code of Canon Law, cann. 959–991; Vatican biography of St. Pio of Pietrelcina (vatican.va, canonization 2002), quoting Pope St. Paul VI (Feb 20, 1971); Avvenire, Feb 24, 2024, quoting Il Settimanale di Padre Pio (testimony of Pietro Cugino; our translation).

The Friday Fast — Catechism §§1438, 2043; Code of Canon Law, cann. 1249–1253 (esp. can. 1250); NCCB (now USCCB), Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence (1966), nos. 22–25; USCCB, Fast & Abstinence; USCCB, What is Lent? (Fasting and Abstinence Q&A).

Almsgiving — Matthew 6:1–4 (Douay-Rheims); St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, Hom. 19; Catechism §§1434, 2447, 2462.

Spiritual Reading — St. Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah, Prologue (c. 408–410); the tradition of lectio divina; Catechism §§133, 1177, 2653.

Prayers — Anima Christi as given at 1765sanctumco.com/prayers/anima-christi/.

This is a catechetical and devotional work, not a doctrinal statement; no nihil obstat or imprimatur has been sought, and no priest, deacon or theologian has reviewed it. Prayer texts are the received traditional forms. Written with AI assistance under our published rules and checked against the sources cited. 1765sanctumco.com/about/editorial-standards/ Offered free to all who would have it; may be reproduced and shared without charge; may not be modified.

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