

Striving for Purity

(22 Aug 23: Queenship of Mary)

Executive Summary

1. Frequent Confession.
2. Pray the Angelic Warfare Confraternity often.
3. Meditate on Sacred Scripture daily.
4. Wear the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
5. Get an accountability partner, if needed.
6. Practice custody of the mind and senses.
7. Begin again.

Explanation of Items 1 through 7

1. If you fall into a sexual sin, go to confession that week, so that you can go to Communion. You need the grace of Confession and the Eucharist. We recommend you go twice a month and as needed. Some people need to go to Confession weekly, especially those suffering with addictions. [If you do have an addiction, we also recommend working through the book *Be Restored* by Dr. Bob Schuchts (available upon request for free).] Priests are here to help you encounter Jesus and to heal; they bring God's mercy in the confessional, not His judgment.

2. The Angelic Warfare Confraternity prayer is very powerful. You can enroll in the Confraternity and obtain the spiritual benefits of the prayers of the "team." It is anonymous. The Blessed Mother will obtain grace from God to reduce the intensity of your temptations. All of Heaven is rooting for you to succeed. People with addictions to impurity should pray it daily. This prayer and others are available at <https://www.nococcm.org/fr-freihofers-resources/>. [If you feel that your addiction is strong, Fr. Michael has two other prayer resources available. He will discern with you as to whether you need them.]

3. The goal of meditating on the Gospels is to develop the mind of Christ. He gives us the truth—it sets us free. A good way to learn how to meditate on Scripture is by using *My Meditation on the Gospel*. If you have an addiction to sexual sin, we suggest you start out by meditating on Scripture for 10 minutes a day for the first two weeks. Then try 20 minutes for two weeks. Then at four weeks, meditate for 30 minutes a day. Proverb: It is better to sacrifice and pray for 30 minutes a day [preventive maintenance] than to suffer from guilt, depression, and self-anger for 60 minutes [after sinning]. Sexual sin deprives anyone of energy and sleep, and it is a misuse of a sacred gift.

4. The Blessed Virgin Mary wants a deep relationship with you. She is key to gaining sexual purity. By wearing a scapular, you are inviting her to be your Mother and friend. She will walk with you toward her Son Jesus.

5. If you are really struggling, find a trusted friend. For men, your accountability partner should be a man; for women, a woman. Text or call your accountability partner if you are strongly tempted. He/she can talk you out of sinning. Also, get all the blocking software you need to keep impurity off your phone and computer.

6. Guard your mind and senses—take custody. Catch yourself early if you are wandering into "lustful waters." Quickly turn your temptation into a prayer. For example, "Heavenly Father, I am tempted toward lustful thoughts (feelings) toward this person; please bless him/her and humble me." Gently and quickly move away from lustful thoughts and feelings. Also, think: You would not put impure pictures of yourself on the Internet for people to view; nor would you want anyone to look at impure pictures of one of your family members.

Over →

7. All of us fall into sin. Sometimes, after sinning, we are tempted toward self-hatred and think that we will never make progress or that God has given up on us. These are lies from the devil. If you fall, begin your spiritual walk again. Jesus is waiting for you with open arms. Begin again!

More Notes Regarding Item 3 (Meditation)

-You could meditate on the daily Gospel readings. Here is one method from St. Ignatius:

A Brief Introduction to Ignatian Biblical Meditation (Rational Reflection):

1. *Begin*: Consider how God looks upon you and loves you; become aware of being in God's presence. Stand for a moment, bow if you wish, then be seated for prayer.

2. *Preparatory Prayer*: Offer to God all your will and actions, especially in this time of prayer. Ask God for a specific grace that you need and desire right now (peace, consolation, hope, etc.).

3. *Meditate on the Biblical Text* that you have selected:

-***Read*** the biblical text through slowly, recalling what it is about; then let it come alive for you!

-***Reflect*** on the truths God wants to teach you in this text.

-***Ponder*** the meaning of each word, phrase, and sentence.

-***Focus*** on two or three points (words, phrases, images, ideas) that stand out to you.

-***Embrace*** what God is saying to you; let your heart be moved with love and desire.

-***Notice*** what is going on inside you as you pray: joy, sorrow, peace, confusion, love, anger, etc.

-If you get distracted or your mind wanders, gently return to the biblical text and your focal points.

4. *Colloquy*: Enter into a short personal conversation with Jesus (or God the Father, or the Holy Spirit). Speak heart-to-heart, as if conversing with a close friend.

5. *Closing Prayer*: Conclude by praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, or another familiar/favorite prayer. You might stand, kneel, bow, raise your hands, or adopt another posture to mark the end of your prayer.

-**Look forward** to your next prayerful encounter with God. When? Where? Which biblical text?

More Notes Regarding Items 2 and 4 (Help from Mary and the Angels and Saints)

-As stated earlier, Mary wants to be your friend and Mother. Also, the rest of Heaven is rooting for you. Check out this passage from the *Diary* of St. Faustina, paragraph 1560:

February 3, [1938]. Today after Holy Communion, Jesus again gave me a few directives: First, do not fight against a temptation by yourself, but disclose it to the confessor at once, and then the temptation will lose all its force. Second, during these ordeals do not lose your peace; live in My presence; ask My Mother and the Saints for help. Third, have the certitude that I am looking at you and supporting you. Fourth, do not fear either struggles of the soul or any temptations, because I am supporting you; if only you are willing to fight, know that the victory is always on your side. Fifth, know that by fighting bravely you give Me great glory and amass merits for yourself. Temptation gives you a chance to show Me your fidelity.

If this handout was helpful, please share it with others. Evangelize! Don't let the good news stop with you. Spread it.