

Seven Daily Habits

for Faithful
Catholics



a free booklet from the
Mary Foundation

If You Really Like This Booklet

Consider Giving it Away.

The Mary Foundation, the nonprofit publisher of this booklet, invites you to order copies to distribute to your family, friends, parish, and associates. We are making this booklet (along with our hugely popular Catholic CDs and novels) available in large quantities for a nominal donation. We will even send you free copies if you write to us directly using the convenient order forms in the back of this booklet. See the back pages for more details or visit us online today at CatholiCity.com.

NIHIL OBSTAT

Father Gerald J. Bednar, PhD • Censor Deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

✠ Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon, MTh, MA
Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio • Granted August 28, 2013

The Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the Nihil Obstat or Imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed.

Printing History:

June 2011 (100,000)

November 2011 (100,000)

August 2012 (100,000)

August 2013 (50,000)

What Real People are Saying About Our Free Catholic Booklets, Novels, and CDs...

Every Catholic in America needs to read this booklet. I really didn't expect something as simple and easy as examining my conscience every night to have such a dramatic impact on improving my actions the following day, but it did. Never underestimate the power of Father McCloskey's "Seven Habits" to help change the lives of people that you know.

-Fran Noble, Catholic Convert

"Seven Habits" really changed my life when a friend gave it to me several years ago. I was already doing a few of the habits, but after I read the booklet, I decided to add fifteen minutes of silent prayer every day. It made me a better husband, father, and friend, and I feel closer to Jesus, and much more in tune with His will for me. I'm giving out hundreds of copies everywhere I can.

-Joseph Wood, Executive

Your novel **Pierced by a Sword** has changed my life in ways that I cannot explain. I have delved deeper into my faith with such complete joy. I also play Mary Foundation CDs over and over because each time I learn something new. They touch my soul. I share them with all. My spirit rejoices in knowing that your novels, CDs, and booklets helped me become a better Catholic and better human being. Thank you! God Bless you and all who help you in your good works.

-Sandy Smith, Mom

A Realistic Approach to Changing Your Life

Have you ever wondered why you have not yet become a saint? If you're like most people, the answer is simple: you need to spend more time with J esus. You are reading this because you are interested in taking your relationship with Christ more seriously from this point forward. You already know that J esus is the one way to holiness: "I am the way, the truth and the life." The secret of holiness is constant prayer which could be defined as continual contact with the Holy Trinity: "Pray always and do not lose heart." (Luke 18:1)

The Only True Happiness

There are various ways to come to know J esus. We are going to speak briefly about some of them in this little booklet. You want to come to know, love, and serve J esus the same way you learn to love and stay in love with anybody (your spouse, family members, and close friends), namely, by spending a considerable amount of time with Him on a daily basis. The payoff, if you will, is true contentment in this life and eternal happiness with God in the next. There are no easy substitutes. Sanctification is a work of a lifetime and it requires our determined effort to cooperate with God's sanctifying grace through the sacraments.

What Are the Seven Habits?

The seven daily habits are the Morning Offering, Spiritual Reading, the Rosary, Holy Communion, Mental Prayer, the Angelus, and Examination of Conscience.

These are essential means for achieving holiness. If you are a person who wants to bring Christ to others through your friendships, these are the instruments

by which you store up the spiritual energy that will enable you to do so. Attempting to evangelize others without having the sacraments and a solid interior life will be ineffective in the long run. You can be sure that all the saints incorporated, in one way or another, all of these habits into their daily routine. Your goal is to be like them—that is, a prayerful contemplative in the midst of the world.

More Important than Meals, Sleep, or Work

I want to stress a few points before going over the habits themselves. First, remember that growing in these daily habits, just like taking on a diet or a physical exercise program, is a gradual work in progress. Do not expect to insert all seven (or even two or three) of these into your daily schedule immediately. You would not attempt a marathon without training beforehand or try to play Mozart after your third piano lesson. Haste will invite failure and God wants you to succeed at both your pace and His. You should work closely with your spiritual advisor (for more on finding a spiritual advisor, please see my article at fathermccloskey.com).

Gradually incorporate the habits into your life over a period of time in a way that fits your particular situation. For example, you may not be able to adjust your schedule right away to be able to attend Mass every day due to geographical or professional limitations.

Next, with the help of the Holy Spirit and your favorite saints, you must make a firm commitment to make the seven habits the priority of your life—more important than meals, sleep, work, and recreation.

I want to make it clear that these habits cannot be accomplished without effort and planning. They must be incorporated into your day when you are alert, as a regular part of your schedule, and in places that are without distractions.

Lastly, you are not losing time out of your day but

rather, in reality, you will gain time. I have never met a person who lived the seven habits on a daily basis who became a less productive worker, a worse spouse, who had less time for his friends, or could no longer grow in his cultural life. Quite the contrary, God always rewards those who put him first. Our Lord will multiply your time as he did with those few loaves and fishes that fed the multitude. You can be sure supremely productive married saints such as Saint Gianna Molla and Saint Thomas More prayed much more than the time you will require for the seven daily habits.

1 The Morning Offering

The first habit is the morning offering. This is when you offer the day ahead for God's glory using your own words or a memorized prayer. But what has to happen before your offering is crucial. As Saint Josemaria Escriva put it: "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."

In my pastoral experience, those who get a full night's rest and conquer the "heroic minute" in the morning—the very first moment when we wake up—will have both the physical and spiritual wherewithal throughout the day to incorporate the seven habits into their daily routine.

2. Fifteen Minutes of Silent Prayer

The second habit is to pray for at least fifteen minutes in silence. Eventually you may wish to augment this with an additional fifteen minutes, perhaps at another time during the day. After all, who will not desire even more time with such excellent company? Prayer is simply a conversation with Jesus, ideally before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. This is your "face time" or "quality time" with Our Lord when you

can open up about whatever is on your mind and in your heart.

At the same time you will be able to acquire the habit of listening carefully and prayerfully to discover what Jesus is asking of you and what He wants to give you. Your soul is not unlike an answering machine; Jesus can leave you profound messages even if you do not hear Him directly during your prayer time. It is through silent prayer that we come to understand his saying: "Without Me, you can do nothing."

3. Receiving Holy Communion

The third daily habit is participating in Holy Mass and receiving Holy Communion in the state of grace (that is being free from serious sin and having gone to Confession). This is the most important of the seven habits. As Jesus taught:

I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:22-65)

The Holy Eucharist has to be at the very center of our interior life, and consequently, of our day. This is the most intimate act possible for a human being.

For a more in-depth treatment of this crucial subject, I recommend two free talks from the Mary Foundation, "Seven Secrets of the Eucharist" and "The Mass Explained." To receive your free copies refer to CatholiCity.com or use the order forms at the back of this booklet.

4. Fifteen Minutes of Spiritual Reading

The fourth daily habit is fifteen minutes of spiritual reading. This normally should consist of a few minutes of systematic reading of the New Testament

to identify ourselves with the words and actions of our Savior, followed by time spent on a classic book on Catholic spirituality. As Saint Josemaria advised: “Don’t neglect your spiritual reading. Reading has made many saints.”

In a way, spiritual reading is the most practical daily habit. Over the years we will review the Life of Christ many times over while acquiring the wisdom of the Church through dozens of books. Only by enlightening our intellect can we apply spiritual truths to our actions. As Saint Josemaria wrote: “For the modern apostle, an hour of study is equal to an hour of prayer.” As for which books to read, I provide a lifetime reading list for Catholics on my webpage at CatholicCity.com to help get you started.

5. Pray the Angelus

The fifth daily habit takes but a few minutes. It consists of pausing in the midst of our daily activities at noontime to pray the Angelus to our Blessed Mother. This Catholic custom goes back many centuries. If you are not familiar with this prayer you can find it online at CatholicCity.com. It is a wonderful way to address our Blessed Mother every day (just as any good child remembers his mother) while meditating on the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord.

6. Pray the Holy Rosary

The sixth habit also focuses on Our Lady. It consists of praying the Holy Rosary each day while meditating on its mysteries, which in essence provide a survey of the life of Our Lord and Our Lady. The benefits of the Rosary are life-changing and defy description. Here is what Saint Louis de Montfort, the greatest apostle of the Rosary, taught:

If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory. Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have

one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil, and even if you are a heretic as obstinate as a devil, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and will save your soul, if—and mark well what I say—if you say the Holy Rosary devoutly every day until death for the purpose of knowing the truth and obtaining contrition and pardon for your sins.

The Rosary is a habit that, once acquired, is difficult to break. By repeating words of love to Mary and offering up each Rosary for our intentions, we take a shortcut to Jesus by passing through the heart of his mother.

Nowadays many Christians find it helpful to pray along with a recording. Free Rosary CDs (or downloads for your mp3 player or phone) are available from the Mary Foundation at CatholicCity.com.

7. Examine Your Conscience

The seventh habit is to make a brief examination of your conscience before bedtime. Find a quiet place, then call upon the Holy Spirit for insight. Take a few minutes to go over your day in God's presence. Ask if you behaved as a true child of God at home, at work, and with your friends.

You should also review the one particular area you have identified (perhaps with the help of your spiritual adviser) which must be improved in order to become a saint.

Next, ask yourself if you have been faithful to the seven daily habits described in this booklet. Conclude with an act of gratitude for all the good you have done and an act of contrition for those areas in which you have willfully failed. Then, take your well-deserved rest, drifting off to sleep while conversing with Jesus and your mother Mary.

Virtually everyone that develops this habit finds it enjoyable, relaxing, and liberating. With God, you are clearing your mind and cleaning the slate for the following morning. Although it is deceptively simple

and only takes a few minutes, the power of this habit to produce immediate, tangible results will be dramatic and pleasing.

The Time Is Already There

If you take an honest account of your day, no matter how busy you are, you will usually find that you have wasted time. Consider skipping that extra cup of coffee so you can visit the Blessed Sacrament for ten minutes before work. Perhaps you can forego an hour or more wasted on watching television, fiddling around on the Internet or playing video games.

Most of us can pray a Rosary during our commute and still have plenty of time left over to listen to the radio or call friends. We can all substitute spiritual reading for some of our online or newspaper reading. Can you sacrifice some of your lunch hour to have time for noon Mass? The point is, if you make loving God your highest priority, the time is already there during your typical day.

Do Not Be Discouraged

Once again, as you gradually incorporate the Seven Habits into your day, you will suffer temporary setbacks if you move too hastily. Measure your progress in terms of weeks and months as you add each new habit. Most people can add all the habits within six months to a year. A few years from now, your life and the lives of those you love will be dramatically transformed because Jesus will be able to form you more powerfully several times a day, every day, month after month, year after year.

Would you like to reach others with this booklet?

The Mary Foundation can send you as many copies as you want for a nominal donation. Visit us online or use the convenient Order Forms that follow.

FREE Catholic Booklets

Available in Packs of Ten

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

For questions about your order and to receive the monthly Catholicity email message.

Suggested **Optional** Donation for up to three packs of ten booklets:

\$1 to \$10 for each pack of ten booklets

Minimum donation for more than three packs of ten:

\$1 to \$10 for each pack of ten booklets

Quantity Returning to Confession	+	Quantity 7 Daily Habits for Catholics	=	Total Number of Packs of Ten
_____		_____		_____
Packs of Ten		Packs of Ten		

X Donation Per Pack of Ten \$ _____

= Donation for Booklets \$ _____

Optional Extra Gift for Shipping \$ _____

CANADA and OTHER COUNTRIES:

You must order online using a credit card.

Extra Gift to Support Our Work \$ _____

TOTAL DONATION \$ _____

Make checks payable to "The Mary Foundation" Your gift is tax deductible.

Mary Foundation®

Mail this Order Form to:

Mary Foundation Booklets

PO Box 26101 • Fairview Park, OH 44126

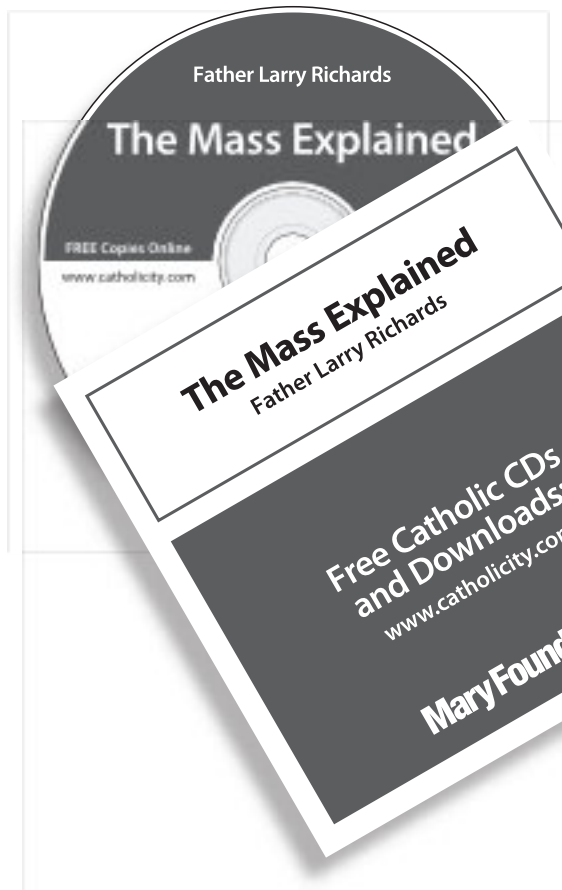
Want Your Materials Even Faster?

Order Online:

www.catholicity.com

Outside the U.S.: only online orders will be accepted. We'll ship your materials the day we receive your letter or online order. We only send materials to those who write us directly; don't send us any address other than your own.

Order Your FREE Catholic CDs Today



Father Larry Richards

The Mass Explained

FREE Copies Online

www.catholiccity.com

The Mass Explained
Father Larry Richards

Free Catholic CDs
and Downloads
www.catholiccity.com

Mary Found

FREE Catholic CDs

From the Mary Foundation, the World's
Largest Producer of Catholic CDs

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

For questions about your order and to receive the monthly Catholicity email message.

Suggested **Optional** Donation for up to eight CDs: **\$1 to \$10 each**
Minimum donation for **more than eight CDs**: **\$1 to \$5 each**

Quantity The Rosary	+	Quantity The Mass Explained	+	Quantity 7 Secrets of the Eucharist	=	Total Number of CDs
---------------------------	---	-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---------------------------

X Donation Per CD \$ _____

= Donation for CDs \$ _____

Optional Extra Gift for Shipping \$ _____

CANADA and OTHER COUNTRIES:
You must order online using a credit card.

Extra Gift to Support Our Work \$ _____

TOTAL DONATION \$ _____

Make checks payable to "Mary Foundation." Your gift is tax deductible.

Mary Foundation.

Mail this Order Form to:

Mary Foundation • PO Box 26101
Fairview Park, OH 44126-0101

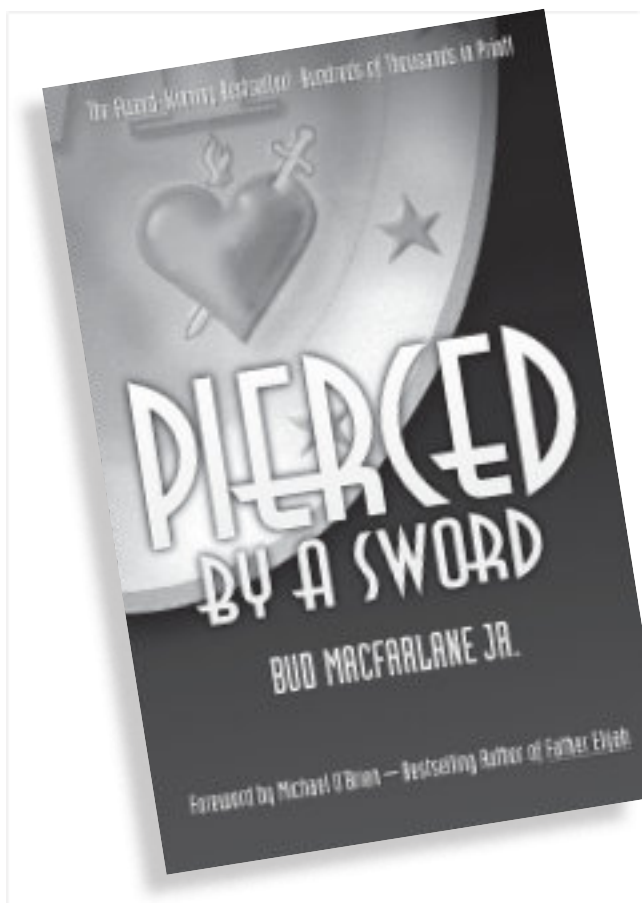
Catholicity.

Want Your Materials Even Faster?

Order Online:
www.catholicity.com

Outside the U.S.: only online orders will be accepted. We'll ship your materials the day we receive your letter or online request. We only send materials to those who write us directly. don't send us any address other than your own.

**Order Your FREE
Catholic Novel Today**



FREE Catholic Novel

PIERCED BY A SWORD
America's Best-Selling Catholic Novel.
You are in this story. Find yourself.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

For questions about your order and to receive the monthly Catholicity email message.

Suggested **Optional** Donation for up to three books: **\$1 to \$10 each**
Minimum donation for **more than three books**: **\$1 to \$10 each**

Quantity: Pierced by a Sword _____

X Donation Per Book \$ _____

= Donation for Books \$ _____

Optional Extra Gift for Shipping \$ _____

CANADA and OTHER COUNTRIES:
You must order online using a credit card.

Extra Gift to Support Our Work \$ _____

TOTAL DONATION \$ _____

Make checks payable to "Saint Jude Media." Your gift is tax deductible.

Saint Jude Media.

Mail this Order Form to

Saint Jude Media • PO Box 26120
Fairview Park, OH 44126-0120

Catholicity.

Want Your Materials Even Faster?

Order Online:
www.catholicity.com

Outside the U.S.: only online orders will be accepted. We'll ship your materials the day we receive your letter or online request. We only send materials to those who write us directly. don't send us any address other than your own.

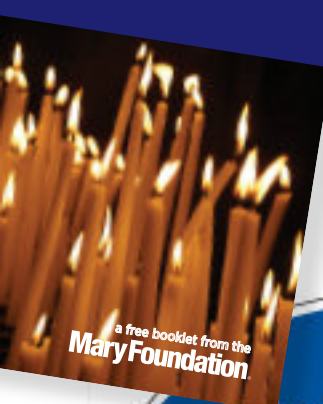
Free Catholic CDs
Free Catholic Novels
Free Catholic Booklets
Free Downloads
Free Shipping

Mary Foundation.

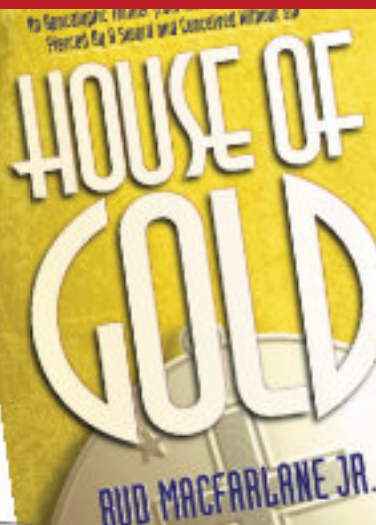
www.catholicity.com

Powerful Prayers

Every Catholic Should Know



a free booklet from the
Mary Foundation



The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet

FREE Copies Online
www.catholicity.com

Write for FREE Copies

The Mary Foundation
PO Box 26101
Fairview Park, OH 44126

Mary Foundation.

Track List: 1-8. The Holy Rosary