

## Ideas for a Practicing Catholic

### Daily Practices

1. **Morning Offering:**
  - Begin the day by offering your thoughts, words, and actions to God.
  - *Example:* “O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day...”
2. **Reading the Bible:**
  - Spend time reading Scripture, focusing especially on the Gospels.
  - Consider using a Catholic Bible app or a daily reading plan.
3. **Prayer and Devotion:**
  - **Rosary:** Pray at least one decade, if not the full Rosary.
  - **Angelus:** At noon or 6 PM, pray the Angelus (or *Regina Caeli* in the Easter Season)
  - **Divine Mercy Chaplet:** Pray at 3 PM, the hour of mercy.
4. **Spiritual Reading:**
  - Read from a spiritual book like *The Imitation of Christ*, *Story of a Soul*, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, or *St. Faustina’s Diary*.
5. **Study the Faith:**
  - Dedicate time to studying the faith, perhaps with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, or listening to podcasts like *Bible in a Year* or *Catechism in a Year* by Fr. Mike Schmitz.
6. **Examination of Conscience:**
  - Reflect on your experiences, words and actions throughout the day. Talk to God about them. Ask for forgiveness if needed and resolve to grow more like Christ in your actions.
7. **Night Prayer (Compline):**
  - Conclude the day with night prayer, using the Liturgy of the Hours or a simple prayer of gratitude and trust. E.g. “*Thank you God for this day. Help me live always close to you.*”

### Weekly Practices

1. **Sunday Mass:**
  - Participate in the Holy Mass with full, active, and conscious participation. After Mass, make a short little of thanksgiving for being able to attend Mass and receive the Most Holy Eucharist.
  - *Consider:* Attending an additional weekday Mass.
2. **Family Prayer Time:**
  - Pray together as a family, especially the Rosary or read Scripture together. Go in a circle and share one thing to thank God for, one to ask for, and then all pray the *Our Father*.
3. **Spiritual Works of Mercy:**
  - Engage in at least one act of charity or mercy, such as visiting the sick, helping those in need, or comforting the sorrowful.
4. **Eucharistic Adoration:**
  - Spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, reflecting on the presence of Christ. Ideally, at least one hour a week. Over time, you may do this on more days.
5. **Scripture Study or Faith Group:**
  - Join or lead a Bible study, faith-sharing group, or another form of communal prayer.

## Monthly Practices

1. **Sacrament of Confession:**
  - Make a good confession to receive God's mercy and grace.
  - Prepare by a thorough examination of conscience.
2. **Spiritual Direction:**
  - Meet with a spiritual director to discuss your spiritual journey and receive guidance.
3. **Day of Reflection or Retreat:**
  - Dedicate a day to prayer, silence, and reflection. Consider visiting a local shrine or retreat center. Alternatively, spend a longer amount of time in prayer at your local parish.
4. **Devotion to Mary or a Saint:**
  - Choose a specific Marian devotion or a saint to reflect on and seek their intercession more deeply. Pray a novena to them, asking for help with something. E.g. The Novena of *Our Lady, Undoer of Knots*, *Novena to the Holy Spirit*, or something else.
5. **Works of Charity:**
  - Volunteer or participate in a charitable activity, such as serving at a soup kitchen or helping with parish outreach.

## Yearly Practices

1. **Annual Retreat:**
  - Attend a more extended retreat for deeper spiritual renewal, such as a silent retreat or Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Ask a local priest to find out where or how to do it.
2. **Re-evaluation of Spiritual Life:**
  - Assess your relationship with God and how you've grown over the year. Set new spiritual goals for the coming year. Think of how to remind yourself of these goals throughout time.
3. **Renewal of Baptismal Promises:**
  - Participate in a renewal of your baptismal promises, often done during the Easter Vigil or on your baptism anniversary.
4. **Pilgrimage:**
  - Consider going on a pilgrimage to a holy site, whether locally or internationally, to deepen your faith. You may want to ask a priest or Catholic friends for some recommendations on where.
5. **Study a New Aspect of the Faith:**
  - Choose a new area of Catholic teaching or tradition to explore in depth, such as the writings of the Church Fathers, the teachings on social justice, or Marian apparitions.
6. **Review Finances and Tithing:**
  - Reflect on your stewardship of the resources God has blessed you with. Reflect on your sacrificial giving, and how you are supporting the Church and other charitable causes. One rule of thumb is to give your first hour of work to God. Therefore, whatever one may make an hour could be a reasonable weekly offering of sacrificial love and gratitude to God.

## Conclusion

This checklist is designed to help you live a vibrant Catholic life that continually draws you closer to the God who loves you. By living these practices, you can grow in holiness, deepen your faith, and live out your Christian vocation with joy and dedication. Remember, these practices are not about checking off boxes but about fostering a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Each of them has a part to play in living out the words that Jesus says are the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind ..." (*Luke 10:27*)