

Father's Notes

April 13, 2025

I'm writing this in on April 3rd, so by the time you read this in the bulletin, we will be entering into Holy Week. I realize we don't live in a culture that embraces or celebrates this important week, so we therefore have to be very intentional about trying to carve out time and to plan, to ensure that it not be just another week for us. Without this intentionality, it comes to be no different than any other week.

I encourage you to limit (or better, to avoid) unnecessary tasks, especially those that tend to be sources of stress. Give time and space to quiet reflection, things that help you to focus and breathe slower. Maybe you and your family can fast from distracting activities, especially screens: YouTube videos, video games, social media, streaming TV series, etc. Trust in it.

With this, if you are going to use your screens, then I want to make another pitch for the Hallow app. Yes, it's accessed through your phone or tablet, but most of what it has to offer is auditory, not visual.

An online article asks and explains, "What is the Hallow app? The Hallow app is a Catholic prayer and meditation app that markets itself as a kind of Catholic reimagination of Calm, or Headspace, which are secular, meditative apps.

"The app is entirely audio in format. There are recordings of people reading Bible passages in calm, meditative voices that you can fall asleep to. There is the popular Bible in a Year podcast by Fr. Mike Schmitz and Ascension Press, there is Catholic music and Gregorian Chant, as well as guided lectio divina reading, the rosary and other recorded prayers, among other features." Why do I recommend it? For one, I believe that so many of us don't know how to use prayer as a way to engage God and allow him to explore our hearts. We might be familiar with devotional prayers, but not necessarily prayer as a means to help us grow in holiness.

So, some of the things it includes are the following (again in audio format): Daily Lectio Divina; Daily scripture reflections and Bible stories; daily contemplation. It also gives access to Fr. Mike Schmitz's Bible in a Year and Catechism in a Year. But so much more.

You can get a free version, however, the regular version (which I have) costs \$70 annually or \$120 for a family plan (much cheaper than a Netflix or Disney+ subscription!). I strongly recommend you try it out, if you're trying to figure out how to develop the habit of prayer or are seeking a little more peace in your life—perhaps especially in Holy Week.



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