

The Essence of Recollection - a summary of the essential principles of Francisco de Osuna's teaching on Recollection and his prayer maxims which form spiritual practice - drawn from The Third Spiritual Alphabetⁱ

Francisco de Osuna's essential teachings on RECOLLECTION (recogimiento) are represented here in three different ways. Firstly in the form of a list of sentences on recollection based on Mary Giles overview of his teaching. Secondly, a list of Francisco de Osuna's prayer maxims which provided a theme for reflection for each treatise in this Alphabet. And thirdly, a circular diagram showing the distinct yet integrally connected spiritual movements of spiritual recollection that Osuna describes in his Sixth Treatise.

The Sentences

Recollection is prayer - it includes vocal prayer, mental prayer and passive prayer.

Recollection is constant alertness and receptivity to God - and in the practice of recollection we are co-operating and participating in the activity of God.

|Recollection can include transforming moments of intense awareness of God

The way of recollection is an 'affective' way where the loving will is, at first, emphasized rather than the intellect.

The way of recollection in the end joins understanding and desire

The way of recollection is the way of friendship with God that is possible for all in this life.

To be recollected is to live out the harmony between Creator and creation.

Recollection includes the negative way to God that is not reliant on sense.

The way of recollection demands an 'emptying of the heart'.

The practice of recollection requires a conscious resolve to ‘go within’ the heart..

Recollection is progressive – there are beginners, proficient and those who have been made perfect in it.

Recollection is an art of love that is practiced in imitation of Jesus Christ , and taught to us by the Holy Spirit.

The way of recollection is also the way of wisdom -a way of the love of goodness.

Recollection is also a paradigm for the whole spiritual life not only one kind of prayer.

Recollection evokes and includes many experiences – profundity, concealment, abstinence, drawing near, enkindling, welcome, consent, the marrow and fat of sacrifice, attraction, adoption, arrival, height, ascension, the third heaven -

Francisco De Osuna’s ‘prayer maxims’ - or wise sayings - in The Third Spiritual Alphabet.

1. *May the person and spirit walk together* - First Treatise.
2. *Let all your works abound in fervent thanks* - Second Treatise
3. *How the soul is to be with God: Blind, deaf and dumb, and always meek.* Third Treatise.
4. *Empty your heart and pour out all created things* - Fourth Treatise
5. *Examine, become experienced and perfect all your works* - Fifth Treatise
6. *Frequently practice recollection to train yourself* - Sixth Treatise
7. *Thoughts start war if the gate is not closed* - Seventh Treatise

8. *Make everyone your masters and while loving them, flee to the One alone.* - Eighth Treatise
9. *Do not let unprofitable departures go undisciplined* - Ninth Treatise
10. *May your tears of recollection be weapons in the fight for glory.* - Tenth Treatise
11. *Remember God constantly and call out to him with sighs* - Eleventh Treatise
12. *Do not think to attain repose by understanding but rather by tasting.* - Twelfth Treatise
13. *Pray before sleep and return to it immediately afterward.* - Thirteenth Treatise
14. *Always correct your soul with Love and not in anger.* - Fourteenth Treatise
15. *Removing obstacles by fixing your eyes to the ground.*- Fifteenth Treatise
16. *Apply love to everything and draw love from everything.*- Sixteenth Treatise
17. *Have your body follow Jesus and your soul his divinity* - Seventeenth Treatise
18. *Retire into yourself often in silence and hope* - Eighteenth Treatise
19. *May humility increase so you may progress well* - Nineteenth Treatise
20. *Temptations are messengers of grace* - Twentieth Treatise
21. *Intimately calming and quietening your understanding* - Twenty-first Treatise
22. *Zealously guard yourself and you will unite perfectly with God* - Twenty-second Treatise.
23. *The tittle signifies your fear not to forsake what you have begun.* - Twenty-third Treatise.

RECOLLECTION

gathering in, collecting up all
bringing self within all

joining sense and reason
drawing self into reason

virtue and wisdom
forming instincts
surrendering powers
receiving energy
focusing energy
calming sense

joining soul

PRAYER

04

ⁱ De Osuna, Francisco. *The Classics of Western Spirituality Society*. Transl and intro by Mary E Giles, 1981. Paulist Press New Jersey.