

“Bucket” Exercise Work Out Program
To Exercise our City of the Lord Founding Charism:
“Receptivity and Commitment to the Person and Culture of the Holy Spirit,
particularly in Covenant Love”

‘Bucket’ Exercise is ...

An Exercise of Desire! An Exercise of Commitment!
An Exercise of Receptivity! An Exercise of Covenant Love!

Expanding Our Capacity for God

Pope Benedict XVI, *“Breakfast with Benedict”* pg 59-60
Excerpt from encyclical letter, *Spe Salvi* #33 “In Hope We Were Saved”

St. Augustine...defines prayer as an exercise of desire. Man was created for greatness – for God himself; he was created to be filled by God. But his heart is too small for the greatness to which it is destined. It must be stretched... He then uses a beautiful image to describe this process of enlargement and preparation of the human heart. *“Suppose God wishes to fill you with honey (a symbol of God’s goodness), but if you are full of vinegar, where will you put the honey?”*

The vessel that is your heart must first be enlarged and then cleansed, freed from the vinegar and its taste. This requires hard work and is painful, but in this way alone do we become suited to that for which we are destined. Although Augustine speaks directly of our capacity for God, it is nevertheless clear that through this effort by which we are freed from vinegar, not only are we made free for God – but we also become open to others. It is only by becoming children of God that we can be with our common Father.

To pray is not to step outside history and withdraw to our own private corner of happiness. When we pray properly, we undergo a process of inner purification which opens us up to God – and thus, to our fellow human beings as well.

Expanding Our Capacity for Exercise –
Start with just 5 minutes a day

Recommendation by Cardinal Desire Mercier of Belgium

The secret of sanctity and happiness consists in spending five minutes daily with our imagination quiet, our eyes shut to all things of sense, and our ears closed to all earthly sounds, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of the soul, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There we speak to the Holy Spirit saying: ‘O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul. I adore you. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do, and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that you ask of me and to accept all that you permit to happen to me, only show me what is your will.’

“The Holy Spirit” published in 1998 by Fr. Michael Scanlan

‘Bucket’ Work Out Program
To Exercise our City of the Lord Founding Charism

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.” (1 Cor 2: 12)

Intro to the exercise program:

This handout describes spiritual exercises that help each of us get in direct contact with the Holy Spirit. As our own personal trainer, He will teach us how to exercise our Founding Charism more fully, in a program designed specifically for each person.

The ‘Bucket’ program of spiritual exercise keeps us fit to build the Culture of the Holy Spirit. It’s a form of iso-metric exercise designed to increase muscle tone, not put on bulk. Tone is defined as the tension in muscles at rest, or normal tissue firmness. Iso-metric exercise occurs when the muscle is fixed in place and held for a significant period of time. With practice the amount of time increases, developing greater muscle tone.

By putting in place the spiritual muscles we use to ‘rest in the Spirit,’ and holding them for a significant amount of time each day -- we strengthen our capacity to receive from Him what we are not able to accomplish on our own, and to balance the activity we do when we are at work sharing with others what we have received.

Bucket exercise is a 3-part program:

- 1- A warm up period
- 2- An iso-metric work out
- 3- A stretch out period

Each part addresses an aspect of our Founding Charism:

**“Receptivity and Commitment to the Person and Culture of the Holy Spirit,
particularly in Covenant Love”**

- 1) In the warm up period:
we exercise our charism of Commitment to the Holy Spirit
- 2) In the iso-metric work out:
we exercise our charism of Receptivity to the Holy Spirit
- 3) In the stretch out period:
we exercise our charism of Covenant love

“To pray is not to step outside history and withdraw to our own private corner of happiness. When we pray properly, we undergo a process of inner purification which opens us up to God – and thus, to our fellow human beings as well.”

-- Pope Benedict XVI, *“Breakfast with Benedict”* pg 59-60
Excerpt from encyclical letter, *Spe Salvi* #33 “In Hope We Were Saved”

Here is a sample Bucket Exercise Program, with steps for each of the 3 parts

**The ‘Zechariah’ Warm Up period: 5 steps
To exercise our charism of Commitment to the Holy Spirit**

- 1- Return to the Lord**
“Return to me, says the Lord, and I will return to you” (Zech 1:3)
Make a commitment to spend (x) amount of time each day doing your bucket exercises (5 minute minimum; try to build up to 20 if you can)
- 2- Be Silent before the Lord**
“Be silent before the Lord, all flesh –for He has roused Himself from His holy dwelling” (Zech 2:13)
State your desire to learn interior silence in order to encounter the Holy Spirit within; this requires that you sit comfortably with your eyes closed, keeping your body relaxed and still
- 3- Let the Lord rebuke spirits other than the Holy Spirit**
“And the Lord said to Satan: ‘The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, Rebuke you!’” (Zech 3:2)
Let the Lord rebuke Satan, or any other spirits than the Holy Spirit. Hear within your own heart the Lord’s words from Scripture rebuking him, and entrust yourself to God’s protection as you prepare to rest in the Spirit.
- 4- Have a conversation with the Holy Spirit; Ask Him to speak a word to you** *“This is the word of the Lord: not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech 4:6)*
Speak directly to the Holy Spirit, to deepen your personal relationship with Him; express your love for Him, your gratitude to Him; confess your need for Him to live your life through His power within you. Then ask the Holy Spirit for a word addressed specifically to you, to use in your work out time. It might be a single word, a short phrase, or it could be a special name by which you can address the Holy Spirit. (He may give you the same word for a period of time, and then change.)
- 5- Fear Not! The Holy Spirit has your good in mind!**
“I have purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem: Fear not!” (Zech 8:15)
Resolve to trust the Holy Spirit. Let the Spirit of Love cast out any fear in you – anything that would try to discourage or intimidate you from keeping your daily commitment to exercise the incredible charism you have received.

The ‘Centurion’ Isometric Work Out: 7 steps To exercise our charism of Receptivity to the Holy Spirit

The ‘Centurion’ Work Out is based on two verses from the gospel of Luke.

“Lord, say but the word, and let my servant be healed.” (Lk 7:7)

“I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith!” (Lk 7:9)

After doing your warm ups, you are ready to start your work out – resting in the Spirit, receptive only to Him. (It is helpful to set a timer when you begin, so you can relax and keep your eyes closed, rather than checking the clock.)

We grow in our founding charism of Receptivity, by exercising faith. Faith itself is a charism, a gift received in Baptism. By simply resting in the Spirit, “saying but the word,” we exercise our faith with the same humility the Centurion showed when he sought from Jesus what he himself could not provide for his servant. We seek from the Holy Spirit those things we cannot provide for ourselves: healing, forgiveness, conversion, transformation, growth in our relationship with Him, and in all the gifts of the Spirit. When we rest in the Spirit, we ‘endure the emptiness’ of restraining our own natural senses and our own thoughts and desires, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to communicate a spirit of ‘wisdom & revelation’ – those things of which St. Paul says: “God has revealed to us through the Spirit... what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived – for the Spirit searches everything” (1 Cor 2:10,9)

Now begin to exercise spiritual receptivity as you rest in the Holy Spirit:

- 1- Relax and get settled in your chair; sit up straight, but not rigid
- 2- Set the timer (5 minutes minimum)
- 3- Close you eyes & take a few deep breaths

- 4- Begin to “Say but the word” – given to you by the Holy Spirit. Repeat it silently within, not moving your lips. Hear the word within.

- 5- Continue to “Say but the word” as you lower your bucket into the Well of the Holy Spirit – resting in His presence.

- 6- In faith, continue to “Say but the word” during the whole work out period. If you notice you’ve gotten distracted, gently turn your thoughts back to the word.

(Distractions are inevitable; we are used to ‘following an inspiration of the Spirit’ during other times of prayer. The purpose of Bucket exercise is not to follow yet – but to keep our ‘resting muscles’ flexed to sustain receptivity. The Holy Spirit will remind us later of anything important.)

- 7- When the timer goes off, you’re ready for the Stretch Out exercises

The ‘COTL Covenant’ Stretch Out: 7 steps To exercise our charism of Covenant Love

After any work out, it’s important to stretch out your muscles before launching immediately into your daily activity. The ‘COTL Covenant Stretch Out’ exercises are designed to help us build a Culture of the Holy Spirit throughout the day as we exercise Covenant Love. In our relationships with others, we will encounter Flexibility Drills that keep our bucket supple and docile to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Now begin the Stretch Out exercises:

- 1- When the timer goes off, keep your eyes closed while you raise your bucket to the surface of the Well of the Holy Spirit. Finish saying your word and begin to stretch out with a prayer of thanksgiving for the time you have just spent, receiving 1 on 1 ministry from Him.
- 2- Open your eyes when you’re ready.
- 3- **Stretch Out** your charism of Commitment by offering God your day: “We wish to present our bodies as a spiritual sacrifice to God, placing our lives, our resources, and our future in His hands and at His disposal.”
- 4- **Stretch Out** your charism of Receptivity by standing prepared to let the Holy Spirit lead you throughout the day: “We...stand prepared...to follow the unfolding plan of God for us as a people wherever it may lead and whatever the consequences in the days ahead.”
- 5- **Stretch Out** your faith in God’s choice of you to do His work in the power of the Holy Spirit: “We take this step freely, without reservation, in personal response to the call of God, and in faith.”
- 6- **Flexibility Drill #1** – Throughout the day, remember our first Covenant Agreement, “to love, support, and honor one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.”
- 7- **Flexibility Drill #2** – In each relationship, see an opportunity to practice our second Covenant Agreement, “to conduct our relationships...in the fruit of the Holy Spirit...eager to build one another up in the Lord; quick to forgive and ask forgiveness; to exhort and admonish one another – respectful, upbuilding, and loyal in our speech.”

Faithfulness to your Charism Exercise program will produce amazing results. It is guaranteed to keep you “fit for service, reflecting the character of the Holy God who dwells in our midst.” *Come Holy Spirit, and fill my Bucket!!*

‘Bucket’ Work Out Program – Made Easy

The ‘Zechariah’ Warm Up period: 5 steps

To exercise our charism of Commitment to the Holy Spirit

- 1- Return to the Lord
 - 2- Be Silent before the Lord
 - 3- Let the Lord rebuke spirits other than the Holy Spirit
 - 4- Have a conversation with the Holy Spirit; Ask Him to speak a word to *you*, personally
 - 5- Fear Not! The Holy Spirit has your good in mind!
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The ‘Centurion’ Isometric Work Out: 7 steps

To exercise our charism of Receptivity to the Holy Spirit

- 1- Relax and get settled in your chair; sit up straight, but not rigid
 - 2- Set the timer (5 minutes minimum)
 - 3- Close your eyes & take a few deep breaths
 - 4- Begin to “Say but the word”— Repeat it silently within, Hear it within
 - 5- Continue to “Say but the word” as you lower your bucket into the Well of the Holy Spirit – resting in His presence.
 - 6- In faith, continue to “Say but the word” during the whole work out period. If you notice you’ve gotten distracted, gently turn your thoughts back to the word.
 - 7- When the timer goes off, you’re ready for the Stretch Out exercises
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The ‘COTL Covenant’ Stretch Out: 7 steps

To exercise our charism of Covenant Love

- 1- When the timer goes off, keep your eyes closed; finish saying your word and begin a prayer of thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit
- 2- Open your eyes when you’re ready
- 3- **Stretch Out** your Commitment by offering God your day:
“We wish to present our bodies as a spiritual sacrifice to God, placing our lives, our resources, and our future in His hands and at His disposal.”
- 4- **Stretch Out** your Receptivity to the Holy Spirit throughout the day:
“We stand prepared to follow the unfolding plan of God for us as a people, wherever it may lead and whatever the consequences.”
- 5- **Stretch Out** your faith: “We take this step freely, without reservation, in personal response to the call of God, and in faith.”
- 6- **Flexibility Drill:** remember “to love, support, and honor one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.”
- 7- **Flexibility Drill:** see opportunities “to conduct our relationships...in the fruit of the Holy Spirit...eager to build one another up in the Lord; quick to forgive and ask forgiveness; to exhort and admonish one another – respectful, upbuilding, and loyal in our speech.”