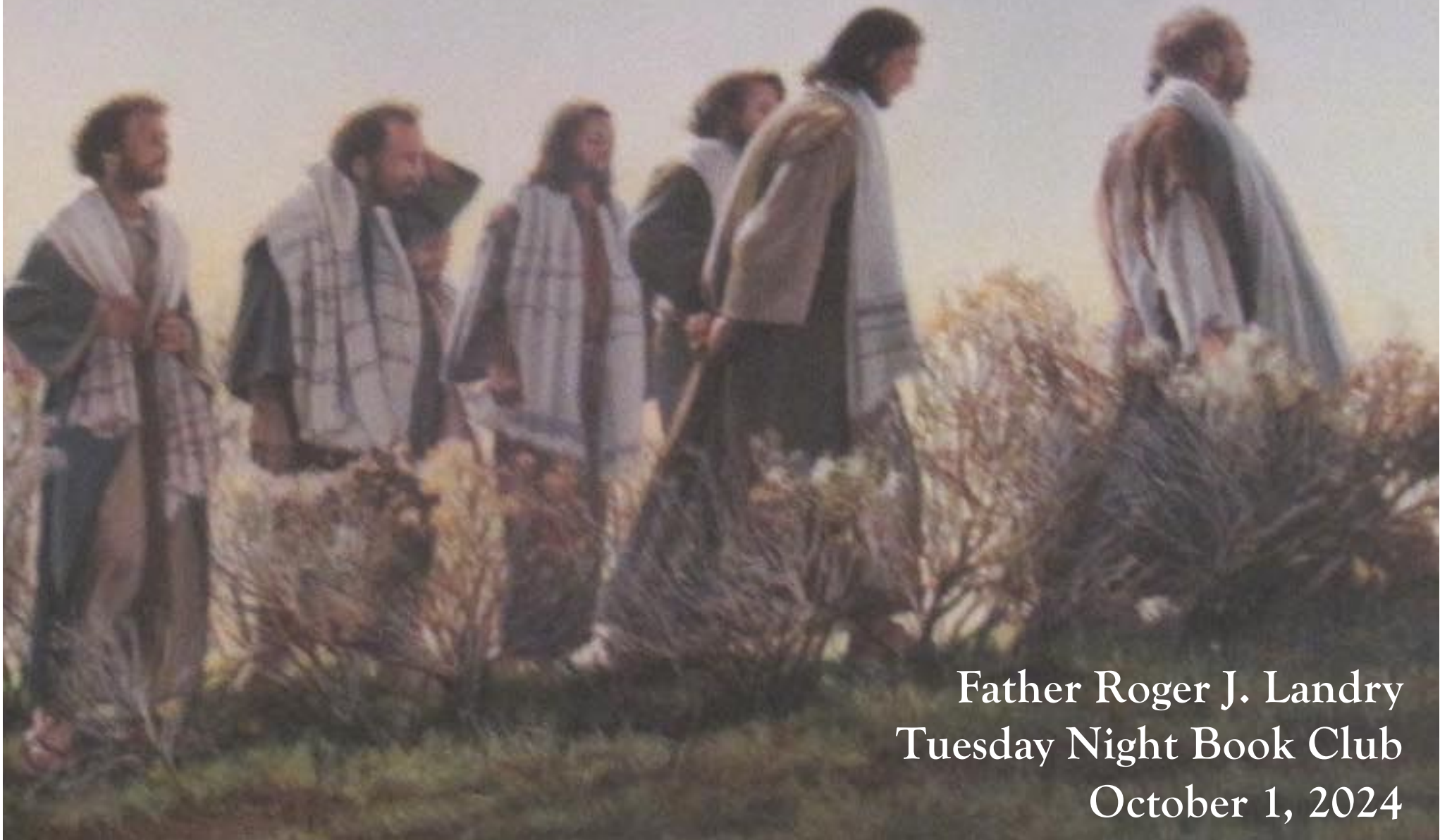
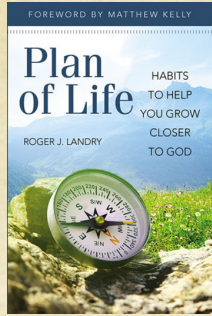


Creating a Plan of Life: Habits to Help You Grow Closer to God

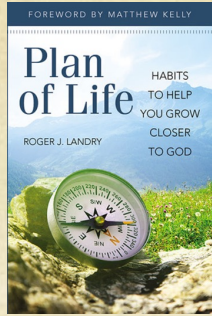


Father Roger J. Landry
Tuesday Night Book Club
October 1, 2024



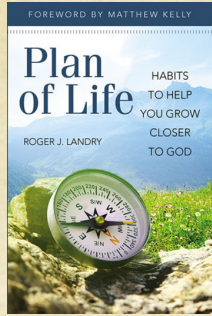
The Importance of a Plan

- In almost every sphere of life, those who take something seriously come up with a plan:
 - Championship sports teams
 - Flourishing businesses
 - Triumphant political campaigns
 - Successful individuals in almost any sphere of life
- Those who get results are generally the ones with better plans implemented with perseverance.
- It's true, too, of the spiritual life, which is way too important to wing.



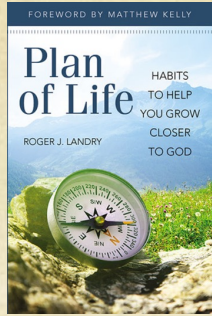
The Importance of a Spiritual Plan

- Jesus spoke about how we need a training regimen, or plan, to grow in the spiritual life: “No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when *fully trained*, every disciple will be like his teacher.” (Lk 6:40)
- Saint Paul specialized in providing training in the Christian life. His letters are full of advice from an expert coach in the spiritual life.
 - Paul exhorted parents to raise their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” and he provided the same training for his spiritual children (Eph 6:4).
 - He urged the young Saint Timothy, “Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” (1 Tim 4:7–8).
 - He followed his own advice, telling the Corinthians, “I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.” (1 Cor 9:26–27).



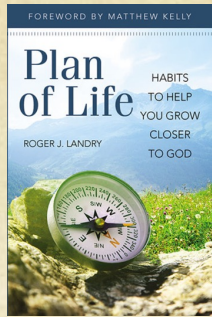
The Two Elements of a Spiritual Plan

- A plan involves two essential elements:
 - The goal
 - The adequate means to obtain that goal
- In the spiritual life, the goal is holiness.
 - To become holy as God is holy.
 - To become like God, growing fully in his image and likeness.
 - Since God is love: to receive God's love and to love as he loves.
- A spiritual plan of life without this goal of holiness is to embark on a journey to the wrong destination, to put the ladder up on the wrong wall.



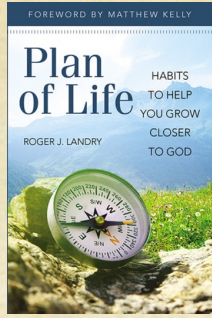
The Goal of Holiness

- St. John Paul II wrote about this goal in 2001 in his pastoral plan for the third Christian millennium (*Novo millennio ineunte*):
 - “I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness.”
 - “Stressing holiness remains more than ever an urgent pastoral task.”
 - “It is necessary to rediscover the full practical significance of ... the universal call to holiness.”
 - “All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity.”
 - “It would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.”
 - “The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living.”



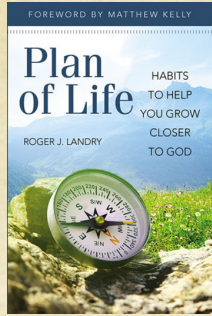
Pope Francis on Holiness

- “The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.”
- “Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbors.”
- “Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church.”
- “We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.”
- “In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God’s love.”



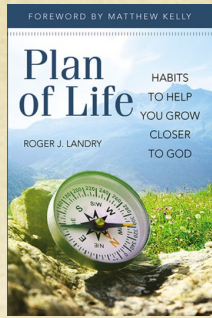
Pope Francis on Holiness

- “Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self.”
- “It is my hope that ... the whole Church [will] devote herself anew to promoting the desire for holiness. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us a fervent longing to be saints for God’s greater glory, and let us encourage one another in this effort. In this way, we will share a happiness that the world will not be able to take from us.”



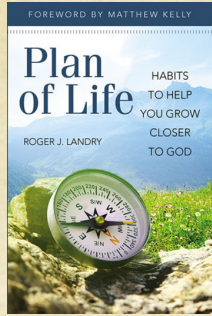
The Means: Training in Holiness

- St. John Paul II likewise stressed the means:
 - “The paths to holiness are personal and call for a **genuine training in holiness** adapted to people’s needs.”
- He underlined six pillars of holiness:
 - The primacy of grace (God’s free action)
 - Prayer – “This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the *art of prayer*.”
 - The Sunday Eucharist
 - The Sacrament of Reconciliation
 - Listening to the Word of God
 - Proclaiming the Word of God



What is a Plan of Life?

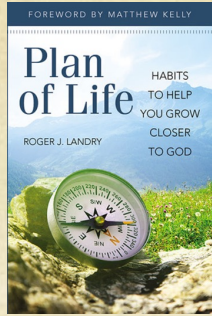
- Integrating those pillars into one's life and receiving all of the help God wants to give us by means of them requires effort!
- A Plan of Life is a unified series of commitments we make to grow in holiness.
 - It's a “game plan” for our spiritual life to help us achieve the goal.
 - It involves various spiritual exercises given to us by saints and spiritual directors to help us translate our desire to grow closer to God from vague wish to reality
 - It helps us to keep a full-time awareness of God – and how he is trying to help us – throughout the day.
 - It is a means by which we seek to live in God's kingdom, to follow Jesus, and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.



Elements of a Broader Plan of Life

- In *Plan of Life*, I describe and develop a series of different practices to help one keep an awareness of God throughout the day, to abide in him and allow him to abide in us (Jn 15:4)
- The book is divided into two parts: the “basics” and “beyond the basics.”
- I list the following 12 fundamental practices:

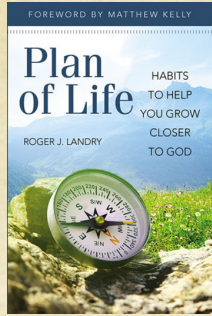
The Holy Spirit	Heroic moment	Morning Offering	General Exam
Regular Prayer	Sacred Scripture	Keeping Holy the Lord's Day	Frequent Confession
Adoration	Charity	Holy Week	Rosary



Elements of a Plan of Life

- Then I focused on the following 16 practices in “Beyond the Basics”:

Daily Mass	Spiritual Communion	<i>Angelus</i> or <i>Regina Caeli</i>	<i>Memorare</i>
Saturday devotions to Mary	Virtue of Penance	Fasting	Order and Organization
Particular Exam	Work	Study	Spiritual Reading
Retreats and Days of Recollection	Acts of the Heart: Faith, Hope, Love, Presence of God, Divine Filiation, Thanksgiving, Atonement	Aspirations	Christian Joy



Final Tips and Thoughts

- What I've given is not an exhaustive list of helpful spiritual practices and exercises, but they cover the essential elements.
- Knowing and listing them is easy; putting them into practice is what is the challenge. No one can do everything at once. Choose one or a few of these practices and begin to form new habits. Once they become part of your “second nature,” move on to others. Be patient and persevere.
- Now is the wonderful time to start working on forming habits that will last the rest of one's life.
- Jesus said, “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them” (Jn 13:17).



Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts. You may also follow postings of articles, homilies and teachings on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

You can also subscribe to the podcast of daily homilies, lectures and talks through Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry



Most Recent Homilies

- God's Comfort and the Conversion Required to Receive It, Second Sunday of Advent (B), December 6, 2020
- Accepting, Following and Announcing Jesus without Offense, Second Sunday of Advent (EF), December 6, 2020
- Walking the Way of the Kingdom Jesus Indicates, First Saturday of Advent, December 5, 2020
- Running to Meet Our Light, Strength and Salvation, First Friday of Advent, December 4, 2020
- Listening to and Acting on the Long Awaited One's Words, First Thursday of Advent, December 3, 2020
- Going Hungry to Meet Christ in a Three-Fold Banquet, First Wednesday of Advent, December 2, 2020
- Childlike Eyes to See, First Tuesday of Advent, December 1, 2020
- Singing the Song of the Lamb, 34th Wednesday (II), November 25, 2020
- Turning to the Lord Who Comes to Judge the Earth, 34th Tuesday (II), November 24, 2020
- Following the King and Lamb Wherever He Goes, 34th Monday (II), November 23, 2020

Most Recent Articles

- Our Duty and Salvation, The Anchor, November 27, 2020
- Living the Reality of the Kingdom of Christ, National Catholic Register, November 19, 2020
- The Knights Our Age Needs, The Anchor, November 13, 2020
- Remembering Andrew Walther, November 7, 2020
- Just a Parish Priest, The Anchor, October 30, 2020
- Coming to Know the Original Three-Dimensional Carlo Acutis, The Anchor, October 16, 2020
- A Good Shepherd Full of Christian and Priestly Virtues, The Pilot, October 5, 2020
- Returning to the Sacrament of Divine Love, The Anchor, September 18, 2020
- The Pastoral Malpractice of Liturgical Abuse, The Anchor, September 4, 2020
- The Chosen, The Anchor, August 21, 2020

Most Recent Talks

- Receiving the Lord Jesus as Mary and Joseph, Advent Day of Recollection for the Leonine Forum, December 5, 2020
- Novena in Preparation for the Immaculate Conception, Leonine Forum, November 28 to December 8, 2020
- Blessed Michael McGivney and the Call to Holiness, McGivney Festival Young Adult Prayer Vigil, October 31, 2020
- Apprenticeship in the Art of Living, Duc in Altum Virtual Schools Summit, October 28-30, 2020
- Preaching on Marital Love and Accompanying Couples toward the Full Embrace of the Church's Teaching, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020
- The Divorced and Remarried, Challenges and Triumphs in Pastoral Care, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020
- The Heart of the New Evangelization: Meeting, Knowing and Loving Jesus Back, New Zealand Evangelion's in his Name Virtual Conference, October 10-11, 2020
- Christian Anthropology: The Human Person in the Modern World, Leonine Forum Opening Lecture, October 8, 2020
- Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching, UNSRC Catholic Club, August 27, 2020
- Making Better Confessions, Catholic Information Conference, July 24, 2020

For the Slides of this Talk

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www.catholicpreaching.com

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Email: fatherlandry@catholicpreaching.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/FrRogerLandry

Twitter: [@FrRogerLandry](https://twitter.com/FrRogerLandry)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/roger.landry.524>

A group of men in traditional robes walking through a field of tall grasses. The scene is set outdoors, likely in a rural or agricultural area, with a soft, hazy background. The men are dressed in simple, earthy-toned clothing, including tunics and shawls. They appear to be engaged in a journey or a shared activity, possibly related to the book being discussed.

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Questions and Comments

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