

Saints for Emotional Eating & Drinking

A Spiritual Guide to Health & Wholeness

A companion to your Conversion of Health & Heart workshop — fourteen saints, fourteen struggles, and one simple practice you already know: Pause & Pivot.

Welcome!

If you've ever stood in front of an open pantry not because you were hungry, but because you were stressed, lonely, bored, or just plain exhausted — you are in very good company. Some of the holiest people who ever lived wrestled with the very same pull toward comfort in the wrong places.

This guide pairs fourteen common emotional triggers with a saint who lived through that exact struggle, along with a virtue to cultivate and a practical way to live it out. Think of these saints as your prayer team — the ones cheering you on from heaven every time you reach for the fridge handle instead of your fork.

Keep this guide on your counter, in your Bible, or tucked into your workout bag. When a craving hits, find your trigger, say a quick word to your saint, and Pause & Pivot.

The Pause & Pivot Practice

Every saint in this guide is really teaching the same lesson in a different outfit: in the moment of temptation, **pause** before you reach, and **pivot** toward God instead of toward the pantry. It sounds simple because it is — but simple isn't always easy, which is exactly why we practice it.

How to Pause & Pivot in the Moment

- 1. PAUSE.** Notice the urge before you act on it. Name what you're actually feeling — stress, loneliness, boredom, shame, fatigue.
- 2. PRAY.** Offer that feeling to God in a single sentence. Borrow a line from your saint of the day if it helps.
- 3. PIVOT.** Choose one small, life-giving action instead — a glass of water, a short walk, a text to a friend, or simply sitting with the feeling a moment longer before deciding.

You'll see a "Pause & Pivot in Practice" note on every saint page in this guide, giving you a specific line of prayer and a specific pivot for that particular struggle.

St. Martha

Stress & Overwhelm

Virtue: Order & Trust



“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is necessary.”

**Luke
10:41-42**

THE SAINT

St. Martha, sister to Mary and Lazarus, was known for her industrious and practical nature. She was often found busy with household duties, as seen in the Gospel where she complained to Jesus about Mary not helping her serve. Her life was one of service and managing the daily affairs of her household.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Martha's constant activity and occasional frustration when things weren't perfectly managed mirror the feelings of overwhelm many experience, leading to stress-driven eating or drinking. Her story reminds us that while diligence is important, it's also crucial to find rest and trust in a higher plan.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When you feel overwhelmed and reach for food or drink, pause. Ask yourself what task or worry is causing this feeling. Can you delegate, simplify, or break it down? Practice the virtue of Order by creating a simple plan for your day, and cultivate Trust by releasing the need for absolute control, knowing that you are supported.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Lord, take this task from my shoulders for a moment — I trust You with it.” Pivot: Write down the one thing causing the overwhelm, then step away from the kitchen for five minutes before deciding what (if anything) you actually need.

REFLECT

What's one task on your plate right now that you could delegate, simplify, or let go of entirely?

St. Teresa of Ávila

Stress & Anxiety

Virtue: Interior Peace



“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you... Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” **John 14:27**

THE SAINT

St. Teresa of Ávila was a Carmelite nun, mystic, and Doctor of the Church. She faced numerous internal struggles with prayer and spiritual dryness, yet through perseverance, she found profound union with God. She is renowned for her writings on contemplative prayer and her ability to articulate deep spiritual truths.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Teresa's life was marked by intense spiritual battles and periods of anxiety. She understood the turmoil of the mind and heart. Her journey teaches us that true peace comes not from the absence of struggle, but from cultivating an inner stillness amidst life's storms.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When anxiety prompts you to eat or drink mindlessly, try a “Teresa Pause.” Take three slow, deep breaths. Focus on your breath, bringing your awareness inward. Repeat a simple prayer like, “Lord, grant me Your peace.” Cultivate Interior Peace by practicing mindfulness and recognizing that external circumstances do not have to dictate your internal state.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Lord, grant me Your peace.” Pivot: Three slow breaths before you open the cabinet — then ask if it's hunger or anxiety asking.

REFLECT

When anxiety rises, where in your body do you feel it first? What would it look like to bring that exact spot to prayer?

St. Monica

Loneliness & Grief

Virtue: Hope



"Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." **1 Peter 5:7**

THE SAINT

St. Monica was the mother of St. Augustine. She endured years of deep sorrow due to her husband's paganism and her son's wayward lifestyle. Her defining characteristic was her persistent, tearful prayer for their conversion.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Monica's life was a testament to enduring grief and loneliness, yet she never lost hope. Her unwavering faith in God's power to transform hearts is a beacon for anyone struggling with the pain of loss or isolation, which can often lead to seeking comfort in food or drink.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When loneliness or grief lead you to seek solace in eating or drinking, remember Monica's enduring prayer. Connect with a trusted friend, family member, or support group. Engage in activities that nourish your soul, like reading spiritual texts or listening to uplifting music. Cultivate Hope by trusting that you are never truly alone when you turn to God.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Mother Monica, pray for my hope when the house feels too quiet." Pivot: Call or text one person before you eat — connection first, food second.

REFLECT

Who is one person you could reach out to today instead of reaching for the pantry?

St. Mary Magdalene

Shame & Guilt

Virtue: Mercy



“Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.” **John 8:11**

THE SAINT

St. Mary Magdalene is a prominent figure in the Gospels, known for being a devoted follower of Jesus and one of the first witnesses to His resurrection. Traditionally, she is understood to have been a sinner who was forgiven by Jesus, leading to her profound transformation and devotion.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Mary Magdalene's story is one of profound redemption and acceptance. Her experience of receiving immense forgiveness allows her to be a powerful intercessor for those burdened by shame and guilt, which often fuel unhealthy coping mechanisms like emotional eating or drinking.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When feelings of shame or guilt arise, leading you to seek comfort in food or drink, turn to Mary Magdalene. Acknowledge your feelings without judgment. Recall Jesus' compassion and forgiveness. Practice Mercy towards yourself by recognizing your inherent worth and trusting in God's unending love.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Jesus, You do not condemn me — help me stop condemning myself.” Pivot: Name the shame out loud, then say one sentence of mercy to yourself before you decide what to eat.

REFLECT

What's one thing you're still holding against yourself that Jesus has already let go of?

St. Peter

Shame & Relapse

Virtue: Perseverance



“Simon, son of John, do you love me?... Feed my sheep.” **John 21:17**

THE SAINT

St. Peter, originally named Simon, was one of Jesus' most prominent apostles. Despite his deep love for Jesus, he famously denied Him three times out of fear. However, after Jesus' resurrection, Peter was restored and became a foundational leader of the early Church.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Peter's journey from a profound failure and denial to a pillar of faith makes him an ideal patron for those struggling with shame after relapses. His story assures us that a fall does not mean the end of the journey, and that forgiveness and restoration are possible.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

If you experience a relapse in emotional eating or drinking, do not succumb to shame. Remember Peter's denial and subsequent restoration. Pick yourself up, learn from the experience, and recommit to your health journey. Cultivate Perseverance by focusing on progress, not just the setback.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Lord, You restored Peter after his fall — restore me too, right now.” Pivot: After a slip, the very next choice is your pivot. Don't wait for Monday — start again at the next meal.

REFLECT

What's the story you tell yourself after a relapse? How might Peter's restoration rewrite that story?

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Control Issues

Virtue: Discernment



“Test everything; hold fast what is good.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21

THE SAINT

St. Ignatius of Loyola, a former soldier, experienced a profound conversion after being wounded in battle. He founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and developed the Spiritual Exercises, a method for discerning God's will.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Ignatius understood the importance of self-mastery and aligning one's will with God's. His emphasis on discernment helps individuals understand the underlying motivations behind their actions, particularly those driven by a need for control, which can manifest as rigid eating habits or attempts to suppress emotions.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When a need for control over food or drink arises, practice Discernment. Ask yourself: Is this desire coming from a place of true health, or from anxiety and a need to rigidly manage my emotions? Develop a flexible approach to nutrition and self-care, trusting God's guidance over rigid control.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Lord, show me what's really driving this — give me discernment, not just discipline.” Pivot: Ask “why” once before restricting or rigidly controlling — then choose flexibility over fear.

REFLECT

Where in your food or exercise routine has discipline quietly turned into fear-driven control?

St. Augustine

Boredom & Restlessness

Virtue: Temperance



"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

**St. Augustine,
Confessions**

THE SAINT

St. Augustine of Hippo, a brilliant theologian and philosopher, had a turbulent youth marked by intellectual searching and worldly desires before his dramatic conversion. His *Confessions* is a profound exploration of his life and spiritual journey.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Augustine's early life was characterized by a restless heart seeking fulfillment in various pursuits, including sensual pleasures. His eventual finding of peace in God speaks to the struggle with boredom and restlessness, which can lead to seeking constant stimulation through food or drink.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When boredom or restlessness leads you to the pantry or the drink cabinet, remember Augustine's quest. Cultivate Temperance by finding healthy, engaging activities that nourish your mind and spirit — reading, creative pursuits, meaningful conversation, or prayer.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Our hearts are restless, Lord, until they rest in You." Pivot: Name one non-food activity you enjoy and do five minutes of it before deciding if you're still bored.

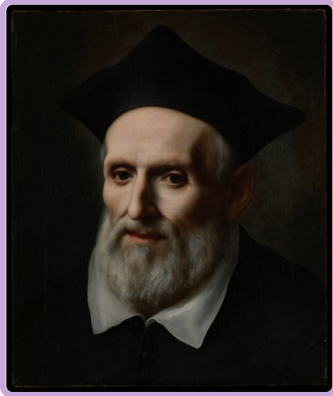
REFLECT

What is your restlessness usually trying to tell you, underneath the urge to snack?

St. Philip Neri

Mindless Eating & Celebration

Virtue: Joy



"The joy of the Lord is your strength." **Nehemiah 8:10**

THE SAINT

St. Philip Neri was known for his infectious cheerfulness, his love of God, and his ability to bring people together. He founded the Oratory, a community of priests dedicated to prayer, preaching, and charitable works, often using humor in his spiritual direction.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Philip understood the importance of healthy celebration and the dangers of indulgence, even in joyful occasions. His spirit of genuine, God-centered Joy offers a counterpoint to compulsive or mindless eating during celebrations or as a way to chase fleeting happiness.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When celebrating, be mindful of your food and drink choices. Engage fully in the joy of the occasion, focusing on connection and gratitude. Practice Joy by finding delight in simple pleasures, good company, and spiritual practices, not solely in the food.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Lord, let me celebrate You, not just the dessert table." Pivot: Before a second helping at a celebration, ask: am I savoring this, or numbing out on it?

REFLECT

What brings you genuine joy that has nothing to do with food? When did you last make time for it?

St. Gianna Beretta Molla

Exhaustion & Burnout

Virtue: Self-Gift with Wisdom



"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

**Matthew
11:28**

THE SAINT

St. Gianna Beretta Molla was a wife, mother, and pediatrician who exemplified deep faith and selfless love. She chose to carry a difficult pregnancy to term, knowing it would likely cost her life, prioritizing the life of her child above her own comfort.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Gianna's life and death highlight the beauty and challenge of self-giving. Her story resonates with those experiencing exhaustion and burnout, often from overextending themselves in service or work. She teaches the importance of giving ourselves wisely and with deep faith.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When you feel exhausted and tempted to turn to food or drink for comfort or energy, reflect on Gianna's sacrifice. Recognize the signs of burnout and prioritize rest and self-care. Practice Self-Gift with Wisdom by setting healthy boundaries and discerning where your energy is best spent.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Lord, teach me to give myself away wisely, not recklessly." Pivot: Before reaching for a quick energy fix, ask what kind of rest you actually need — and take five real minutes of it.

REFLECT

What is one form of rest you keep putting off because you feel you don't deserve it yet?

St. Camillus de Lellis

Caregiver Fatigue

Virtue: Compassion with Boundaries



"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **Mark 12:31**

THE SAINT

St. Camillus de Lellis was a soldier and later founded the Order of Ministers of the Sick. He dedicated his life to caring for the sick, especially those suffering from plague, often at great personal risk.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Camillus's profound dedication to the suffering highlights the virtue of Compassion. However, his story also implicitly reminds us that even the most compassionate caregivers need to care for themselves to continue their vital work. Caregiver fatigue can lead to neglecting one's own needs, including healthy eating.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

If you are a caregiver experiencing fatigue, acknowledge your weariness. Turn to St. Camillus for strength and wisdom. Practice Compassion with Boundaries by finding moments for rest, seeking support from others, and ensuring your own nutritional needs are met.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Lord, help me care for others without abandoning myself." Pivot: Eat a real, sit-down meal today instead of grazing on the run — you are allowed to be cared for too.

REFLECT

If you treated yourself with the same care you give the people you look after, what would change today?

St. Benedict

Sugar Cravings

Virtue: Moderation



"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

**Philippians
4:5**

THE SAINT

St. Benedict of Nursia is considered the father of Western monasticism. He founded the famous monastery at Monte Cassino and wrote the Rule of St. Benedict, guidelines for monastic life emphasizing prayer, work, and community.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

The Rule of St. Benedict is a masterful guide to balanced living, advocating for Moderation in all things — food, drink, sleep, and work. This emphasis on balance is key to overcoming unhealthy cravings, particularly for sugar, which can signal seeking excessive comfort or energy.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When faced with sugar cravings, remember Benedict's call to moderation. Instead of complete deprivation, which can backfire, focus on mindful consumption and healthy alternatives. Build balanced meals throughout the day to stabilize blood sugar, and find non-food ways to satisfy your need for comfort.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Lord, balance my body and my heart — not too much, not too little." Pivot: Pair the craving with protein or a balanced snack first, then decide if you still want the sweet.

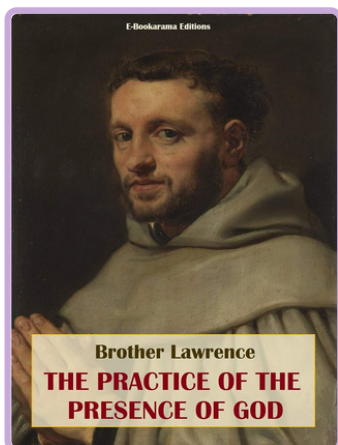
REFLECT

What does a sugar craving usually show up to soothe — fatigue, stress, or something else?

Brother Lawrence

Habitual Eating

Virtue: Presence



“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

**1 Corinthians
10:31**

THE SAINT

Brother Lawrence, born Nicolas Herman, was a lay brother in the Carmelite Order, renowned for his simple yet profound spirituality — particularly his practice of finding God in the ordinary tasks of daily life, famously called “practicing the presence of God.”

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Many eating habits, especially those related to emotional eating, become automatic and habitual. Brother Lawrence's focus on conscious awareness and Presence offers a powerful antidote to unconscious snacking or habitual consumption.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When you find yourself eating out of habit, without conscious thought or hunger, pause and ask: “Am I truly present to this moment and my body's needs?” Practice Presence by bringing full attention to your meals, savoring each bite, and staying present in whatever you're doing.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “Lord, make me present — here, in this moment, with You.” Pivot: Before the automatic bite, name what you're doing out loud: “I am about to eat out of habit.” Then decide on purpose.

REFLECT

What's one habitual eating moment in your day (the car, the couch, the counter) you could bring full attention to this week?

St. Jude

Discouragement

Virtue: Hope



“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

**Jeremiah
29:11**

THE SAINT

St. Jude Thaddeus, one of the twelve apostles, is known as the patron saint of lost causes and desperate situations. His intercession is sought when all other hope seems lost.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

Discouragement can easily lead to giving up on health goals, resulting in increased emotional eating or drinking. St. Jude's patronage of hopeless situations provides immense comfort and inspiration for those feeling defeated in their struggles.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When you feel discouraged about your progress with emotional eating or drinking, turn to St. Jude. Remind yourself that even in the most challenging circumstances, Hope is possible. Reframe setbacks as opportunities to learn and grow, and seek and celebrate small victories.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: “St. Jude, pray for me — help me believe this isn't a lost cause.” Pivot: List one small win from this week before deciding you've failed.

REFLECT

What progress have you made that discouragement is currently hiding from you?

St. Faustina Kowalska

Hopeless Seasons

Virtue: Trust



SAINT FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

"O my Lord, inflame my heart with love for You,
that my spirit may not grow weary amidst the
storms, the sufferings, and the trials."

"Jesus, I trust in You." **Divine Mercy Image Inscription**

THE SAINT

St. Faustina Kowalska was a Polish nun known for her visions of Jesus' Divine Mercy. Her diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, is a powerful testament to God's boundless love and mercy, even in the darkest times.

CHOSEN FOR THIS STRUGGLE

"Hopeless seasons" are periods of intense despair where it feels impossible to make progress. St. Faustina's deep Trust in God's mercy and plan, even amidst her own suffering, provides a powerful model for navigating such difficult times without resorting to destructive coping mechanisms.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

During periods of hopelessness, when you may be tempted to eat or drink to numb the pain, turn to St. Faustina. Embrace the message of Divine Mercy. Practice Trust by consciously placing your struggles into God's hands, one moment at a time, trusting that healing will return.

Pause & Pivot in Practice

Pray: "Jesus, I trust in You — even now, even in this." Pivot: Place the struggle in God's hands with one sentence of prayer before reaching for relief in food.

REFLECT

What's one struggle you're still trying to carry alone instead of placing it in God's hands?

Carrying This Forward

The journey toward emotional and physical wellness is a lifelong one, full of grace and full of setbacks — and both are part of the path. You are not meant to white-knuckle your way through this alone. You have fourteen saints, a Savior who already knows your every struggle, and a simple practice you can use anywhere, anytime: Pause & Pivot.

Virtues to cultivate: Order · Interior Peace · Hope · Mercy · Perseverance · Discernment · Temperance · Joy · Self-Gift with Wisdom · Compassion with Boundaries · Moderation · Presence · Trust

Keep Growing With Me

If this guide resonated with you, the Weight Loss with the Saints 12-week workbook walks through these same virtues with daily habit-building, strength training, and Scripture — and my group and 1:1 coaching offer ongoing support and accountability. Ask us after today's workshop, or visit coachmaura.com to learn more.

May you find comfort, encouragement, and lasting peace on your journey. Alleluia!
— Coach Maura