

Day 2: DAILY EXAMEN

A powerful way to discern spiritual movements and patterns is the *Examen* prayer as developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

This is not examination of conscience. This is *Examen* in the Ignatian context – reviewing your life (typically each day – but you can also take review longer periods) so that God can reveal where and how He has been working in your life.

This involves reviewing your day in the company of God, so that the Holy Spirit can show you the spiritual movements of the day. When did you lose sight of God and march down the path of self? When was God trying to get your attention? When were we in danger of succumbing to temptation? When were you a blessing to others?

When you review your day in the company of the Holy Spirit, He will guide you to the movements of God in your life. Often what we think was most important during the day, really wasn't. And perhaps it was one of the “little things” – a simple compliment to a stranger - where God was most active.

The benefits of the Examen are many as you'll experience for yourself. Here are two that stand out:

First, an underlying power of the *Examen* is that it reveals patterns. When you are faithful to the Examen, over time, you'll become attuned to your spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and to the ebb and flow of God's promptings and the enemy's temptations and deceptions.

Second, when you practice the Examen you become much more aware of God's active role in your life. You know what happens then? You start to trust more. And hope more. And worry less. Because where trust and hope increase, fear and worry decrease. This is demonstrated by every person in scripture who turned to Jesus.

Outline of the Examen (adapted from *The Examen Prayer*, by Fr. Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV)

Transition: I become aware of the love with which God looks upon me as I begin this examen.

Step One: Gratitude. I note the gifts that God's love has given me this day, and I give thanks to God for them.

Step Two: Petition. I ask God for an insight and a strength that will make this examen a work of grace, fruitful beyond my human capacity alone.

Step Three: Review. With my God, I review the day. I look for the stirrings in my heart and the thoughts that God has given me this day. I look also for those that have not been of God. I review my choices in response to both, and throughout the day in general.

Step Four: Forgiveness. I ask for the healing touch of the forgiving God who, with love and respect for me, removes my heart's burdens.

Step Five: Renewal. I look to the following day and, with God, plan concretely how to live it in accord with God's loving desire for my life.

Transition: Aware of God's presence with me, I prayerfully conclude the examen.