

PRAYER OF EXAMEN



St Ignatius of Loyola

About The Examen

More than any other prayer the EXAMEN is the central prayer of St Ignatius. It is a *prayer of looking back*. It is not just reflecting on what has gone wrong but a wider look at what has happened during my day – the good things and the disturbing things – trying to see where God has been moving. The Examen is best used regularly. Most people find it helpful in the quiet time before going to sleep. It takes around a quarter-of-an hour. The prayer covers **FIVE** points...

ONE

- No matter what I am worrying about – STOP!
- God is with me – quiet perhaps, but always there.
- I remember that God has created all things. Everything I have is a gift from God.
- Is there something that I would especially like to give thanks for today?

TWO

- I ask God to shine his light into my heart so that when I look back over the day I may be able to see God working in the things that have happened.

THREE

- Now I remember through the day starting from when I woke-up.
- I remember the people that I met and the things that have happened...

On the whole, was it "good" or "bad" day?

Was it a normal day, or unusual in some way?

Who did I meet during the day?

Did I come across something surprising: a long lost friend through Facebook, an insight, a revelation, a surprise email, a good-news story?

*Does something special come to mind...
a beautiful sunset... something I was told...
something on the TV?*

*In all things that have happened, how did I feel?
Was I joyful or sad, angry or frightened?
Maybe I felt "great!" and was really happy?
What caused my feelings and did they change
during the day?*

God guides us through our moods and feelings. Normally, the way of God is (in a deep sense) peaceful and consoling. If your day was disturbed or if you were uneasy, can you sense where that uneasiness was coming from? Like a sailor who is buffeted by the many different winds, we are affected by many different feelings. The better we come to know these swirling breezes, the easier it will be to see the perhaps subtle movements of God in our lives.

FOUR

- An important question to ask is: what can I be proud of today? (There will be things. If you can't think of anything, then you haven't looked hard enough!) I will give thanks for this...
- But also, did I turn away from God during the day? May be I turned a blind eye when it suited me? Did I recognize God in that homeless person, that sales clerk, that crying baby, that co-worker, that cyclist, that person tail-gating, that relative?
- I will say a prayer asking forgiveness for anything I may have done to ignore or hinder God's love during the day that has passed.
- I will ask especially for the graces of healing and strength.

FIVE

- The final part of the prayer is to look forward to tomorrow.
- I ask God to show me how tomorrow might go.
- I imagine the things I will be doing, the people I will see, and the decisions I will be mulling over.
- I ask for help with any moments I foresee that might be difficult.
- I especially ask for help in moments when I might be tempted to fail in the way I did today.
- We are people of hope. Let us remember that God will be with us then.

A Final Word About The Examen

If we practice the Examen, we will grow to know ourselves and our moods, and with the help of God, see in our prayer the way that God is moving in our lives. As our hearts become more sensitive, we will recognize God more quickly, so that eventually we will be sensitive to the God who is not just in “*holy*” things, but the God who is in ALL things.
