

The Examen - remembering the day

In his Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius urged that all be taught the examen, a daily examination of our deepest feelings and desires. He called these feelings our consolations (what connects us with God, others and ourselves) and desolations (what disconnects us). He believed that God would speak to us through these feelings and desires. It's not surprising that this saint felt so strongly about the examen — this prayer practice changed him from a wild soldier to a pilgrim walking barefoot to Jerusalem.

The examen helps us:

- Acknowledge sad or painful feelings and hear God speaking to us through them.
- Overcome a pessimistic outlook by encouraging us notice the good in each day.
- Tell the truth about who we are and what we need, rather than who we think we should be.
- Become aware of seemingly insignificant moments that ultimately can give direction for our lives.

Preparation: You may wish to light a candle. Do whatever helps you to experience God's loving presence with you. Take a few deep breaths. Breathe in God's love, and when you breathe out, fill the space around you with it.

Step #1 - Ask God to bring to your awareness the moment today for which you are most grateful.

- If you could relive one moment, which one would it be?
- When were you most able to give and receive love today?
- Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so good.

Breathe in the gratitude you felt and receive life again from that moment.

Step #2 - Ask God to bring to your awareness the moment today for which you are least grateful. When were you least able to give and receive love?

Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Relive the feelings without trying to change or fix it in any way.

Take deep breaths and let God's love fill you just as you are.

Step #3- Give thanks for whatever you have experienced. If possible, share as much as possible of these two moments with a friend.