

The Prayer of Examen

(meant as a time of reflection, usually at the end of the day)

Been distracted lately? Many of us have full days of school, work, and relationships via real-world and social media/digital world. It is easy to begin to feel pulled in 1000's of different directions-our focus is drawn away from God, our perspective shifts, our values get distorted. Below is a prayer exercise that might offer you a way to be more intentional in your day-to-day living, raise the awareness of God being with you within your day, and build a spirit of discernment as you grow more connected with the Spirit.

“Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts... Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.” (Psalm 139:1-2,23-24)

Nothing in our lives is so insignificant that it doesn't deserve God's attention. In fact, the mundane and the humdrum parts of our lives give depth and texture to our relationship with God. The Examen focuses on God as being present in our human experience.

Review the day with gratitude.

Gratitude is part of the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them?

- What experience of the day felt most life-giving to me?
- When today did I feel most contented, most like myself?
- When did I sense God's presence most fully today?

Think again through this day:

When did you feel exhausted, confused, angry, mean, gloomy, tempted?"

- For what moment today am I least grateful?
- What experience of the day drained life from me?
- When today did I feel the most discontented, uncomfortable?
- When did God seem absent in my life today?

What should I pray for?

Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you grace for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

And now may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.