

Prayer of Examen

Compiled by Joy O'Byrne

The Prayer of Examen is a brief daily spiritual exercise developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. It assists you in discerning God's presence in your day and becoming more aware of how you are responding to His presence and what He may be saying to you.

It usually takes about 10-20 minutes and can be done at night before bed or in the morning, reflecting on the day before. There are many adaptations to this Prayer, below is one suggestion.

- Begin your time with a few minutes of silence to allow yourself to become quiet before God. Remember that you are always in God's presence and surrounded by His love. *In him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)*
- Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the places in this day (or the day before) He wants you to notice. The Spirit will lead and guide you into the truth and mystery of your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit for the capacity to recall your day with clarity and an understanding. *"When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth."* (John 16:13)
- Review the day. Go back to the start of your day and allow it to play like a movie in your mind. Pay attention to the details and your emotions in the events. What people did you have contact with? What were those interactions like? What was your sense of the presence of God in your day? Where were the places of grace or difficulty? Many situations will show that your heart was divided—wavering between helping and disregarding, scoffing and encouraging, listening and ignoring, rebuking and forgiving, speaking and silence, neglecting and thanking. What did you give and what did you receive?
- Spend some time speaking with Jesus about your day, sharing your thoughts on your actions, attitudes, feelings and interactions. What is it that God wants to bring to your attention? How is He speaking to you? Does it require a response from you? Perhaps during this time you may feel led to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, share a concern, express gratitude, etc. This may also be a good time to journal your thoughts or feelings.
- Ask for guidance and grace for tomorrow and close with the Lord's Prayer.

As you make the Prayer of Examen part of your daily life you have the freedom to find a rhythm that works best for you!