

### Overview:

The Prayer of Examen is a daily exercise in which we seek the Holy Spirit's counsel on our day and/or recent past. It is a moment to know God in what we often consider the little, daily, perhaps even mundane things. We give thanks for the day, ask for light, review the moments we felt distant from God (when we were hurt by someone or something, when we fell into error, when we felt anxiety or depression, etc.) and the moments we felt close to God (when we felt God's grace on something or the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control). We ask forgiveness and healing, give thanks and praise, and pray for wisdom as we walk through tomorrow. St. Ignatius of Loyola taught that this moment - the Prayer of Examen - is the most important moment in the life of believers who seek a more intimate, daily walk with God because this moment with God touches on every moment of our day.

### Time:

15-20 minutes (Although these directions are for an end-of-day Examen, this prayer may also be done in the morning and based on the previous day. If several days pass between Examen prayers, you may broaden your scope to all of those days or the most recent).

### Steps:

1. **RELAX.** Take a few minutes to relax your body and clear your mind. When you're ready, give thanks to God for everything you're grateful for today. It's okay for your mind to wander here as you freely express thanks for the big things and the small things: faith, salvation, a good night's sleep, a working vehicle, etc.
2. **REPLAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit for light: We want the Holy Spirit to show us what he wants us to see, what he wants to show us about our day. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you review the main parts of your day. Now take a moment and review these main parts of your day. Think of this as watching a movie of your day.
3. **REPENT.** Allow yourself to focus on a moment when you felt distant from God: Review this moment. Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with? What were you feeling, saying, etc? Ask God to reveal your shortcomings or the source(s) of your hurt, anxiety, depression, anger, etc. Ask God to heal your hurts, forgive your errors, or give you wisdom so you can handle this situation better next time.
4. **REJOICE.** Allow yourself to focus on a moment when you felt close to God: Review this moment. Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with? What were you feeling, saying, etc? Give thanks and praise to God. Allow yourself to linger in this moment of grace.
5. **RESET.** Look forward to tomorrow: What can you learn from your experiences? (For example, "Every time I talk to this person I leave angry or hurt or sad. I have to learn how to...") Anticipate situations that might be difficult and pray for the grace and wisdom you need to navigate them.

As you gain proficiency in the Examen, you might find it becoming more fluid. For example, as you get more comfortable with stillness and attuning to the Holy Spirit's voice, you might find it effective to allow the Holy Spirit to bring these moments of distance and closeness (steps 3 and 4) to your attention organically and allow him to guide your prayer: the wisdom and understanding you need for your shortcomings and/or the sources of your hurts, anxiety, depression, anger, etc., as well as where God is providing grace in your daily life, where you feel the fruits of the Spirit.