THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN PRAYER

• It is a prayer, not a tabulation of sins – it is a God-centred exercise
• It is a prayer suited to all ages and all walks of life
• It is oriented to a process of discernment, discerning the presence of God in daily life.
• You are recommended to do it at least twice a day for about 15 minutes.

The Five-Step Examen Prayer

1. THANKSGIVING: I thank God for all the benefits received during the day. I begin the prayer with an attitude of gratitude, being grateful to God who has created me, who has sustained my life today, etc. “It is not happiness that makes us grateful; it is gratefulness that makes us happy.” David Steindl-Rast

2. PRAYER FOR THE LIGHT: This is a petition for light to appreciate the blessings as well as to see my failings in the light of my faith. Without God’s light I will not be able to see the subtle deceptions in my life.

3. REVIEW THE DAY: I look at my day and see where God has been active, where the Lifeline has been leading me, etc. As a God-centred activity, my approach will be “where was God during the day and how have I been cooperating with or resisting such invitation.” With God’s light, I hope to see the shadow’s in my thought-word-deed and in my interior movement. Is there a toxic environment within me? Did I become an agent of reconciliation and peace today? Did I reflect the character of God in my life and work today? Did I find God in my work, in my neighbour, in the needy, etc.? Who was the centre of my life today? The Lifeline or the Ego.

4. RECONCILE AND RESOLVE: I accept and own up my shortcomings. I take responsibility for my action. I ask pardon from the Lord for my failings, my resistances and for my lack of generosity. I will ask pardon for losing sight of the presence of the Divine during my day, for forgetting ‘such great benefits received’ or for making myself as the centre of my life.

5. HOPE FOR THE FUTURE: I conclude the Examen with a firm resolution to respond to God better, always with His grace. I look towards the future with hope – hope of finding God in my activities and with the hope of responding to the invitation of the Spirit. And I conclude with an Our Father, or any other appropriate prayer.

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