



EXAMINATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS – A QUALITY PAUSE IN OUR DAILY LIFE

Need for a Pause: When we travel a long distance, a short break would naturally refresh and rejuvenate us. Similarly, in our life journey, as our daily life becomes routine, we do need pauses to refocus and reorient our lives. Such pauses could bring greater productivity to our life. When we pause, we become aware of the present, just as we become conscious of our breathing, of our thoughts and feelings, etc. With the awareness of the present during the pause we are able to review our past and reorient our future as well. A quality pause can help us to evaluate our goals and priorities. This pause has a power to transform our lives.

Examination of Consciousness: Ignatius of Loyola called this pause “examination of conscience.” Today, some Ignatian Scholars prefer to call it Examination of Consciousness. This exercise invites us to look at our day’s activities with the eyes of faith. It is a moment to cast our net into the deep not only to see what we have done but also what happened to us and what was going on within us as we were doing something. That is why consciousness seems to be a more appropriate word than conscience. This is because the entire exercise is not to pass moral judgements on what we have done or failed to do, but a deeper awareness of our entire stream of consciousness, positive as well as negative; life-enhancing as well as life-diminishing; lights as well as shadows. This pause enables us to reflect upon the workings of God in our daily life. We are recommended to do it at least twice a day for about 15 minutes.

The Five-Step Examen Prayer – FIVE R’s

1. **RECONNECT:** To begin with, I reconnect with God with gratitude: being grateful to God who has created me, who has sustained my life today, etc.
2. **RELY:** I rely on the Holy Spirit in order to see the subtle deceptions in my life.
3. **REVIEW:** Here I review the day. I look at my day and see where God has been active, where the Lifeline has been leading me, etc. I ask earnestly, “where was God during the day and how have I been cooperating with or resisting such an invitation?” With God’s light, I hope to see the shadows in my thought-word-deed and in my interior movements. Is there a toxic environment within me? Or, 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:** 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.
5. **RESOLVE:** I conclude the Examen with a firm resolve to respond to God better, always with His grace. And I conclude with an Our Father, or any other appropriate prayer. “For all that has been, Thanks! For all that shall be, Yes!”

A QUALITY PAUSE CAN FACILITATE A QUALITY CHOICE!

A QUALITY PAUSE CAN PROMOTE QUALITY LIFE!

A QUALITY PAUSE IS NOT A LUXURY BUT A NECESSITY!!!