

Daily General Examen – Ignatian Examen Prayer (Done Daily)

Take 5 to 10 Minutes to reflect on the past day

Become aware of God's presence – take time to quiet your body and your mind from all distractions. Ask the Holy Spirit for a graced understanding of your day.

Thank God for the blessings of the day

What were the particular blessings/gifts of the day?

How was I a blessing to someone today?

Ask God for the grace and courage to know your sins and to eradicate them.

Notice the different events of the day, what you felt, and how you acted:

Recall and examine the events of your day. Simply pay attention to any and all feelings that surface. As you review the day ask yourself:

Where was God in the events and the persons of the day?

Was my heart divided in anyway-wavering between helping and disregarding, scoffing and encouraging, listening and ignoring, rebuking and forgiving, speaking and silence, neglecting and thanking?

What moved me to act the way I did?

What habits helped me or hindered me in my actions?

Did my feelings move me towards God's peace or away from God's peace?

Did I act on these feelings in a way that seemed according to God's will or not of God's will?

Choose one of those feelings (positive or negative) and pray from it -

That feeling is a sign that something important is going on. Simply express spontaneously the prayer that surfaces as you attend to the source of the feeling.

Ask God for forgiveness for your sins, beg for his mercy, Look toward the future with hope:

Ask where might I expect to find God in the events and persons I will face tomorrow?

If I am going to be in a situation again that I did not handle well today, how do I want to handle it the next time that I face it?

End with One Our Father.

GRACE – The Ignatian Examen by Fr. Joseph Koterski, SJ

Gratitude

Request for God's light,

Account of Actions and Attitudes,

Chart your Course, whether by continuing on course or correcting it, and

Entreat God for energy and enthusiasm.

One of the most regularly given pieces of advice in the history of Christian spirituality is the regular examination of conscience. Many people do it just before going to confession. But Saint Ignatius of Loyola recommends that we make it a daily prayer by reserving about ten to fifteen minutes at the close of each day, or at some other moment when we can steal a bit of quiet from our busy schedules.

1. Gratitude

Begin, he urges, with a moment of gratitude, and try to be specific – think of something about the day that is just past, or about something in your life for which you are grateful, and say a word of thanks to God. We often talk about counting our blessings, but actually stopping to give God thanks for some of his particular blessings can easily escape us, despite our best intentions.

2. Request for Light

Then ask of God the light by which to see your life, as he wants you to see it. This request for his light is most important in making the examination of conscience into a genuine prayer, and not just

another self-help technique, done purely by our own will power. Even the best of us has some areas of our life we'd rather not look at, and others we can't stop gazing upon. Given our enormous powers of rationalization, we need God's help in coming to see ourselves truthfully as he sees us.

3. Account of One's Actions and Attitudes

Third, make an account of all your actions and attitudes in the course of the day just past. This is likely to be the longest portion of the examination of conscience. If one perseveres in doing it faithfully, day after day in the Lord's light, it can reveal the patterns of sin as well as the patterns of grace in one's life.

Some portions of the day can be reviewed quickly, like a videocassette on fast-forward, but over certain moments we will do well to pause and go slowly, watching to see what triggered what. With God's grace we can notice where things like impatience and anger start and how they grow. And we can come to see just how God's grace may have protected us from jealousy or gossiping. We can take note of just what those "near occasions of sin" really look like, so that we can avoid them a little better tomorrow and not just excuse ourselves from what takes too much effort to change. The standard by which to judge what we have done will always remain the ten commandments, especially when recast by Jesus as the two great commandments about love of God and love of neighbor.

It can be helpful in this third stage of the Examen to spend about a minute simply listing the things we did in the course of the day. After that, we can choose what to look at in greater detail. For this part of the third step, it is often helpful not just to be doing our own analysis but literally to tell the Lord how it went in detail. One might, for instance, talk to Him about a particular conversation that we had, or a specific event. Usually we know when we are telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! But if we find that we are exaggerating something, or hiding something, or twisting something, all we need to do is to say: "Well, Lord, it wasn't quite like that. Let me try again to tell You, a little better this time, what really happened. You know it already, but You want me to know what really happened. I thank you for being willing to listen to me, and for drawing out the truth from me in this way."

One other suggestion for a practical problem that we sometimes face in their lives.. After some angry encounter or something deeply upsetting or something that they are ashamed of, many people feel the inclination to "play the tape" over and over again during the course of the day. But this inclination to replay often does no good, and may even be harmful if we start subtly changing the scenario so as to come out a little better each time we reconsider the matter while the other guy comes off a bit worse. It is usually better to treat the inclination to replay these tapes during the day as if they were temptations. Resolve instead to wait until you get to your prayerful examination of conscience, and only then to allow yourself to review the matter under the Lord's light so as to see the situation in truth and charity.

4. Charting a Course

The fourth step is to chart a course, that is, to make a resolution about what direction to take, whether it be to continue the course you're already on, or to correct your course when you've strayed. If your account of the actions and attitudes of the day has alerted you to anything of sin, you will be all the more prepared for your next confession and can make an Act of Contrition right on the spot. If you find that things have gone well, you will have ready-to-hand something to be especially grateful for when you begin your next examination of conscience.

5. Entreat the Lord for the Energy and Enthusiasm Needed

The final portion of this short prayer is to ask God for the energy and enthusiasm to carry out the

course just charted. In all honesty, we cannot save ourselves, no matter how hard we try. But we cannot fail if we take the help God is so eager to offer.

This method for the examination of conscience is easy to remember by the letters in the word "Grace": (1) Gratitude, (2) Request for God's light, (3) Account of Actions and Attitudes, (4) Chart your Course, whether by continuing on course or correcting it, and (5) Entreat God for energy and enthusiasm. Not only will one be more ready for confession when the time comes, but one will steadily grow in recollection and a sense of God's constant presence.

Particular Examen – different than a general examen (which is an overall review of how I corresponded to God's help and presence throughout the day. A Particular examen involves seeing a good habit I need, a bad habit that I need to eliminate, and then reviewing how I am doing at various times of the day

Suggested points for a particular examen.

Awareness of God's presence at every moment

Docile attentiveness and obedience to the Holy Spirit

Constant cheerfulness because God dwells within me through grace

Listening twice as much as I speak

Recognizing and naming others' good qualities

Seeing God in those I serve

Greeting other's guardian angels so that I always maintain a supernatural vision towards them

Seeing each person as gift sent to me by God

Starting my prayer with praise and thanksgiving

Venerating the crosses/trials God gives me each day

Uniting my work more consciously to the Cross of Jesus, to Our Lady, and to St. Joseph

Doing first the thing that needs to be done rather than what I prefer to do

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: (Done before going the Sacrament of Confession)

Examine Your Conscience.

When was my last good 'Confession? Did I receive communion or other sacraments while in the state of mortal sin? Did I intentionally fail to confess some mortal sin in my previous Confession?

Did I willfully and seriously doubt my faith, or put myself in danger of losing it by reading literature hostile to Catholic teachings or by getting involved with non-Catholic sects? Did I engage in superstitious activities: palm reading, fortune telling, Santeria?

Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I curse or take a false oath? Did I use bad language?

Did I miss Mass, on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault, without any serious reason?

Did I fast and abstain on the prescribed days?

Did I disobey my parents or lawful superiors in important matters?

Was I selfish in how I treated others, especially my spouse, my brothers and sisters, my relatives, or my friends? Did I hatefully quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive?

Did I cause physical injury or even death? Did I get drunk? Did I take illicit drugs? Did I consent to, advise, or actively take part in an abortion?

Did I willfully look at indecent pictures or watch immoral movies or pornography? Did I read immoral books or magazines? Did I engage in impure jokes or conversations? Did I willfully

entertain impure thoughts or feelings? Did I commit impure acts alone or with others? Did I take contraceptive or abortifacient pills, or use other artificial means in order to prevent conception? Did I steal or damage another's property? How much? Have I made reparation for the damages done? Have I been honest in my business relations?

Did I tell lies? Did I sin by slander? By detraction – telling unknown grave faults of others without necessity? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters? Have I tried to make restitution for any damage of reputation that I have caused?

If you remember any other sins, remember to mention them in confession.

Suggestions on how to prepare for Mass

Looking at the Sunday Readings, the Readings for the Holy Day, or the Daily Mass Readings, spending three-ten-fifteen minutes to meditate and let the Lord speak to me through them
Quiet your hearts for the Lord is Here in the Tabernacle!

Pray the mass - proper prayers - not everyone will do this in the same way but whatever you find most helpful to pray the mass utilize that in your prayer time

Bring your intentions to Mass, in fact your very life and place it before the Lord at the Consecration.-

Make a thanksgiving - done after receiving the Eucharist or at the End of Mass

Resolution for this week:

Begin doing a Daily General Examen to see how God is present to me and how do I respond to his presence

Doing my best to prayerfully prepare to go to mass, receive Jesus in Holy Communion, and make an Act of Thanksgiving to Jesus in the Eucharist at mass.

A Prayer Before Mass by St. Thomas Aquinas:

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of Your only-begotten Son Our Lord Jesus Christ. I come sick to the doctor of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness. May I receive the bread of angels,

the King of kings and Lord of lords, with humble reverence, with the purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me to salvation. May I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and its reality and power. O Most Kind God, may I receive the Body of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His mystical body and numbered among His members. Most Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive Your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see him face to face in glory, who lives and reigns with You for ever. Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary Before Mass

O most blessed Virgin Mary, mother most loving and most merciful, I, a miserable and unworthy sinner come before thee, with the heartfelt prayer, that of thy loving kindness thou wouldst vouchsafe graciously to be near me and all who throughout the whole Church are to receive the body and blood of thy Son this day, even as thou wert near thy most dear Son as He hung bleeding on the cross, that, aided by thy gracious help, we may worthily offer up a pure and acceptable sacrifice in the sight of the holy and undivided Trinity.
Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer after Mass by St. Thomas Aquinas

I thank you, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, who deigned to feast me, sinful and unworthy servant, with the precious body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, not for any merit of mine, but only because of your merciful goodness. And I pray that this Holy Communion, far from condemning me to punishment, may bring about my pardon and salvation, encompassing me with the armor of faith and the shield of a good will. By it let my vices be done away, all lustful desires extinguished. May it advance me in charity, patience, humility, obedience, and every other virtue. Let it be strong defense against the wiles of all my enemies, visible and invisible, allaying for me every disturbance of flesh and spirit, binding me firmly to you, the one true God, and bringing my last hour to a happy close. I pray, too, that it may be your pleasure to call my sinful self one day to that banquet, wonderful past all telling, where you, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, feast your saints with the vision of yourself, who are true light, the fulfillment of all desires, the joy that knows no ending, gladness unalloyed, and perfect bliss: through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St. Pio of Pietrelcina after Holy Communion

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close, and life passes; death, judgment, eternity approaches. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You.

It is getting late and death approaches, I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile! Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers. I need You.

Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of the bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the Light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You, if not by communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not merit it, but the gift of Your Presence, oh yes, I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity. *Amen*