

The Daily Examen

Spend a little time each evening in communion with Christ

adapted by Bill Huebsch from an unknown Ignatian source

As you prepare to enter into this daily exercise, find that place in your life where you can sit quietly for at least 15 minutes. Turn off the TV and media, including your mobile phone. Use these notes slowly and confidently. God is about to provide you with a profound experience of divine love.

“The Word of God is very near to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance. See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster...Choose life.” (Dt 30:14, 15, 19)



1. Recall that you are in the presence of God. No matter where you are: hilltop or valley, country or city, in a crowd or alone, you are a creature in the midst of creation. As you quiet yourself, become aware that God is present within you, in the creation that surrounds you, in your body, in those around you.

Pause now briefly here to allow the presence of God to well up around you.

The Creator who brought you forth into being is concerned for you. The Spirit of God, sent by Christ, will remind you that you are gifted to help bring creation to its fullness. Ask the Holy Spirit to let you look on all you see with love. "Love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; ... it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right ... Love hopes all things." (1 Cor.)

Turn your heart toward the Spirit of God. Ask the Spirit to give you the “eyes of love.”

2. Spend a moment looking over your day with gratitude for this day's gifts. Be concrete and let special moments or pleasures spring to mind! Recall the smell of your morning coffee, the taste of something good that you ate, the laugh of a child, the fragrance of a flower, the smile brought forth by a kind word, a lesson that you learned. Take stock of what you received and what you gave. Give thanks to God for favors received.

Pause to think back over your day, hour by hour, moment by moment, bringing back to mind how your day unfolded.



Also look at your permanent gifts that allow your participation in this day. Recall your particular strengths in times of difficulty, your ability to hope in times of weakness, your sense of humor and your life of faith, your intelligence and health, your family and friends. God the Father gives you these to draw you into the fullness of life. As you move through the details of your day, give thanks to God for His presence in the big and the small things of your life.

Let your heart gradually fill with thankfulness for the gifts you have been given. Ask God to free you from envying others for their gifts and become grateful for your own.



3. Ask God to send you His Holy Spirit to help you look at your actions and attitudes and motives with honesty and patience. "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13) The Holy Spirit inspires you to see with growing freedom the development of your life story. The Spirit gives a freedom to look upon yourself without condemnation and without complacency and thus be open to growth.

Ask that you will learn and grow as you reflect, thus deepening your knowledge of self and your relationship with God.

4. Now review your day. This is the longest of the steps. Recall the events of your day; explore the context of your actions. Search for the internal movements of your heart and your interaction with what was before you. Ask what you were involved in and who you were with, and review your hopes and hesitations.

Let your heart search for meaningful moments and events in your day. You are at the same moment, rummaging around in your memories for the presence of God. Only read the following notes if you need them.



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. Remember, this is not a time to dwell on your shortcomings; rather, it is a gentle look with the Lord at how you have responded to God's gifts. It is an opportunity for the growth of self and deepening your relationship with God. Notice where you acted freely—picking a particular course of action from the possibilities you saw. See where you were swept along without freedom. What reactions helped or hindered you? See where Christ entered your decisions and where you might have paused to receive His influence. "Test yourselves," St. Paul urges, "to see whether you live in faith; examine yourselves. Perhaps you yourselves do not realize that Christ Jesus is in you." (2 Cor.) His influence comes through His people, the Body of Christ. His influence comes through Scripture, the Word of God. As you pray, Christ's spirit will help you know His presence and concern. As you daily and prayerfully explore the mystery of yourself in the midst of your actions, you will grow more

familiar with your own spirit and become more aware of the promptings of God's Spirit within you.

Allow God to speak, challenge, encourage and teach you. Thus you will come to know that Christ is with you. Christ will continually invite you to love your neighbor as yourself and strengthen you to do this.



5. The final step is our heart-to-heart talk with Jesus. Here you speak with Jesus about your day. You share your thoughts on your actions, attitudes, feelings and interactions. Perhaps during this time you may feel led to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, share a concern, express gratitude, and so forth.

Having reviewed this day of your life, look upon yourself with compassion and see your need for God and try to realize God's manifestations of concern for you. Express sorrow for sin, the obscuring darkness that surrounds us all, and especially ask forgiveness for the times you resisted God's light today. Give thanks for grace, the enlightening presence of God, and especially praise God for the times you responded in ways that allowed you to better see God's life. Resolve with Jesus to move forward in action where appropriate. You might like to finish your time with the Lords Prayer.