

A Daily Examen through the Season of Lent

This is a prayer of examination in which we try to find the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives by reflecting on our day. This prayer can be made anywhere, but a good time to make the Examen is before going to bed. The Examen leads us to reflect upon how God has been present with us and we present with God or how we did not sense God's presence or heed God's leading by examining contrasting moments in our days. The purpose in praying this way throughout Lent is to help us become more open to the leading of the Spirit in our lives.

There are five simple steps to the Examen, (here adapted *Praying the Jesuit Examination of Conscience*) from which should take 10-15 minutes to complete, and what follows is just one interpretation of these five steps in discerning the movement of God's Spirit in your day.

Before you start: Try to be in a place where you are least likely to be disturbed. Perhaps you might light a candle or change the lighting when you pray to symbolize the start of this activity. Sit comfortably and still yourself; relax, be aware of your breathing, your body and how you are feeling.

- 1. Recall that you are in the presence of God.** 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. God who brought you forth into being is concerned for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to let you look on all you see with an attitude of love (cf. 1 Corinthians 13).
- 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! Take stock of what you received and what you gave. Give thanks to God for favors received. Also look at your permanent gifts bestowed on you by God that enable you to live with strength, hope, a sense of humor, with intellect, faith, health, family and friends. 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.
- 3. Ask God to open you to the 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 Spirit gives a freedom to look upon yourself without condemnation and without complacency and thus be open to growth.
- 4. Now review your day.** This is the longest of the steps. Use the couplet questions below to guide your daily review. 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. 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 growth of self and deepening your relationship with God. Allow God to speak, challenge, encourage and teach you.
- 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, etc. 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 and especially ask forgiveness for the times you resisted God's leading 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 Lord's Prayer.

Daily Examen Questions

Wednesday, Feb. 17	For what time or event today are you most grateful? For which moment are you least grateful?
Thursday, Feb. 18	How did you show love today? What was one time today in which your actions or behavior were negative or you withheld kindness or love?
Friday, Feb. 19	Was there a time you shared today? What was a time today in which you did not share?
Saturday, Feb. 20	What brought joy into your life today? What brought discouragement?
Sunday, Feb. 21	In what circumstance did you experience the presence of God? In what circumstance today did God seem far from you?
Monday, Feb. 22	Was there a time today in which you acted as a peacemaker? Was there a time today in which you brought discord or strife?
Tuesday, Feb. 23	What was a moment in which you found yourself praying today? What was a moment in which you did not want to pray?
Wednesday, Feb. 24	Was there a time today when you listened to someone share a need? Was there a time in which you ignored someone who needed a listening ear?
Thursday, Feb. 25	Did you bring a smile to someone's face today? Did you cause someone to become angry today?
Friday, Feb. 26	What caused you to think about God today? What was a moment in which God was the furthest from your mind?
Saturday, Feb. 27	In what circumstance did you overcome temptation? In what circumstance did you yield to temptation?
Sunday, Feb. 28	Did you forgive someone today? Was there a moment today when you refused to forgive?
Monday, Mar. 1	Remember a moment in which you displayed patience today. In what circumstance today did you not show patience?
Tuesday, Mar. 3	What was a time today in which you noticed the need of another? What was a time today in which you were focused only on your own need?
Wednesday, Mar. 4	Was there a time today in which you showed kindness? Was there a time today in which you acted cruelly towards someone?
Friday, Mar. 5	What opportunity did you encounter today? What discouragement today prevented you from moving forward?
Saturday, Mar. 6	Remember a moment when you exerted self control today. Remember a moment when you lost control of yourself?
Sunday, Mar. 7	What activity was easy to accomplish today? What activity was difficult to do today?
Monday, Mar. 8	What brought peace into your life today? What brought tension?
Tuesday, Mar. 9	In whom did you see Jesus today? In what circumstance did Jesus not seem to be present?
Wednesday, Mar. 10	Can you remember a moment when you received comfort today? Can you remember a moment when you experienced sorrow?
Thursday, Mar. 11	What was a time in which you felt satisfied today? What was a moment today when you felt unsatisfied?
Friday, Mar. 12	Was there a moment today in which you received mercy? Was there a time today in which you experienced little compassion?

Saturday, Mar. 13	For what time or event today are you most grateful? For which moment are you least grateful?
Sunday, Mar. 14	How did you show love today? What was one time today in which your actions or behavior were negative or you withheld kindness or love?
Monday, Mar. 15	Was there a time you shared today? What was a time today in which you did not share?
Tuesday, Mar. 16	What brought joy into your life today? What brought discouragement?
Wednesday, Mar. 17	In what circumstance did you experience the presence of God? In what circumstance today did God seem far from you?
Thursday, Mar. 18	Was there a time today in which you acted as a peacemaker? Was there a time today in which you brought discord or strife?
Friday, Mar. 19	What was a moment in which you found yourself praying today? What was a moment in which you did not want to pray?
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Friday, Mar. 26	What was a time today in which you noticed the need of another? What was a time today in which you were focused only on your own need?
Saturday, Mar. 27	Was there a time today in which you showed kindness? Was there a time today in which you acted cruelly towards someone?
Sunday, Mar. 28	What opportunity did you encounter today? What discouragement today prevented you from moving forward?
Monday, Mar. 29	Remember a moment when you exerted self control today. Remember a moment when you lost control of yourself?
Tuesday, Mar. 30	What activity was easy to accomplish today? What activity was difficult to do today?
Wednesday, Mar. 31	What brought peace into your life today? What brought tension?
Thursday, Apr. 1	What was a time today in which you gave comfort to another? What was a time when you brought anxiety to another?
Friday, Apr. 2	Remember a time today when you helped someone feel good about themselves? What was a time today when you put someone down?
Saturday, Apr. 3	Was there a time today you acted selflessly? Was there a time today you acted selfishly?