

# The Ignatian Journey



## The Examen

### 1. Pray for God's Help

Invite God to be with you during this sacred time, asking God to help you be grateful and honest as you look back on the day. Be attentive to how the Spirit was working in and through you, others, and creation. Let yourself see your day as God sees it.

### 2. Give Thanks for the Gifts of This Day

For Ignatius, gratitude is the first, most important step on the spiritual journey. An attitude of gratitude, practiced often enough, helps us find God in all things and can transform the way we look at our life and at other people.

So review the day and name the blessings, from the most significant and obvious to the more common and ordinary. Be very specific! As you take stock, honor the gifts of others in your life, but don't forget to recognize the gifts in you, for they, too, are God given. Savor whatever gifts God shows you. With God's gentle guidance, *let the day go through you*.

### 3. Pray Over the Significant Feelings That Surface

God communicates with us not only through mental insight but also through our "interior movements," our feelings, emotions, desires, attractions, repulsions, and moods. As you reflect, some strong feelings arise. They may be painful or pleasing—for example, joy, peace, sadness, anxiety, confusion, hope, compassion, regret, anger, confidence, jealousy, self-doubt, boredom, or excitement.

Pick one or two strong feelings or movements and pray from them. Ask God to help you understand what aroused those feelings and where they led you:

- Did they draw you closer to God? Did they help you grow in faith, hope, and love? Did they make you more generous with your time and talent? Did they make you feel more alive, whole, and human? Did they lead you to feel more connected to others or challenge you to grow?
- Or did the feelings lead you away from God, make you less faithful, hopeful, and loving? Did they cause you to become more self-centered or anxious? Did they lure you into doubt and confusion? Did they lead to the breakdown of relationships?

### 4. Rejoice and Seek Forgiveness

Rejoice in those times that you were brought closer to God, and ask forgiveness for those times today when you resisted God's presence in your life. Praise God for the grace of awareness, even if you became aware of things you are not proud of. This awareness is the beginning of healing and conversion.

### 5. Look to Tomorrow

Just as God is with you today, God will be with you as you sleep and when you wake up tomorrow. Invite God to be a part of your future. What do you need God's help with? Be very practical and specific. If it's helpful, look at your schedule for tomorrow. God wants to be there with you, in the most dramatic and mundane moments of your life. Ask God to give you the grace you need—for example, courage, confidence, wisdom, patience, determination, or peace. Close with Lord's Prayer or a prayer of your own words.