



The Ignatian Examen as a Prayer from the Heart

Prelude

I allow myself to become aware that I am in the presence of God. While I may not feel God's presence, I know that the Lord is constantly by my side, aware of all I think, feel, say, and do. Nothing is hidden and I therefore should not be afraid to hold up to God anything in my heart. God desires this close, confidential, and loving relationship. I speak to God from my heart using the name that is most intimate and familiar to me as I place myself in the Divine presence: (Father God, Loving Father, Lord Jesus, Dear Jesus, Loving Lord, Holy Spirit, etc.) Using this most intimate name, I ask God for grace so I can look upon all my actions from God's perspective. I ask God to stand by me and lead me in love and peace during my time of prayer.

I speak to God my gratitude

Using the most intimate and familiar name I know, I give thanks for the gift or life blessing that is most present to me at this time. I speak from my heart telling God why I am grateful, being very particular and naming the things for which I am grateful. If I am unable to feel gratitude for anything, I will give thanks for my life and ask for the gift of gratitude.

I ask God to help me examine my area of greatest vulnerability and weakness

There is one area of my life where I am most likely to fall into temptation and sin. Not only is this the area where I sin most often, but it can also be a source of great anxiety and cause me to lose hope. I speak very personally to God and talk about how I have failed or been able to resist temptation in this area of my life since my last prayer. I walk through these experiences with God by my side, giving thanks where I have grown, and asking for forgiveness and help where I have not been able to resist temptation. I tell God that I am confident that this area of sinfulness will one day be vindicated by God's love working in me. If I feel a sense of discouragement or defeat because of this particular pattern of sinfulness, I pour out my heart to God asking for help not to lose hope or to give into despair. I let God tell me that Jesus' passion and death will be my salvation, and I keep my eyes on God and not on my own weaknesses.

With God as my companion, I pay attention to the events, persons, actions that seem significant

Asking God to inspire my memory, I speak intimately from my heart to God about those things that present themselves to my consciousness. I talk with God about how I interacted with people, noticing especially where I failed to love or forgive someone. If I feel unable to forgive someone or to surrender my anger, I ask God to help me, confiding my weakness and begging for God's grace to do what I, unaided, am unable to accomplish. I also give thanks for relationships and interactions where I responded with Christian charity. I talk with God about my innermost feelings and desires, particularly where I struggle to be free of disordered affections and attractions of whatever kind. I name these feelings and desires as I speak with God. In God's presence, I observe how they affected my actions. I ask God to open me to any other significant events I may have forgotten or missed that are connected to God's desire for my growth in freedom and love. I spend some time listening to my heart.

With confidence born of love, I ask pardon, forgiveness and peace

In my mind's eye, I see Jesus on the cross before me, knowing that he died to free me from my sins. He did this because he loved me so much. In my heart, I know Jesus has mercy on me in my weakness and is joyful that I allow him to forgive me of my failings. His joy comes from my willingness to take advantage of his sacrifice of love. I ask to feel sorrow as I name and offer to him all those things for which I seek his healing love and forgiveness. I ask God for insight to know if any of these actions or omissions necessitates my seeking sacramental reconciliation. I ask to feel hope, knowing that Jesus will always give me his forgiveness and that he desires with all his heart to help me daily grow in his love. I ask him to cut through my pride so that, in humility, I can always know my need for, and the joy of, his healing forgiveness and love. I pray all this to God in personal words that come from my heart.

I ponder how God may be using these events to invite me to greater freedom

Every moment of every day, God is working miracles of grace and mercy to support me in my efforts to live in true freedom and love. God particularly uses my sinfulness and patterns of sinfulness to work miracles of grace and freedom. I listen to my heart and ask God if any of the things I pondered in this prayer suggest or invite a change in the way I pray, live, work, love, play, relate, serve, define success or ambition for the future. Am I being called to hold onto someone or something--to let go of someone or something? With God by my side, I listen for any invitations. I resolve, with God's grace, to make any changes that present themselves to my heart. Finally, in very personal words, I give God thanks for always being by my side to help me and save me. I close by praying *The Lord's Prayer*.



The Ignatian Examen as Sacred Story Prayer

CREATION

*I believe God created everything in love and for love; I ask for the grace of a **heart-felt** knowledge of God's love **for me**, and for **gratitude** for the **general** and **particular** graces of this day.*

PRESENCE

*I believe God is **present** in **each moment** and **event** of my life, and I ask for grace to **awaken, see** and **feel** where and how, especially in this present moment.*

MEMORY

*I believe every violation of love committed by me and against me **is in my memory**, and I ask God to **reveal them to me**, especially those that have manifested themselves today, **so I can be healed**.*

MERCY

*I believe that **forgiveness** is the **only path to healing and illumination**. I beg for the **grace of forgiveness**, and the **grace to forgive**, especially for the **general and particular failures** of this day, and from my past.*

ETERNITY

*I believe the grace of **forgiveness** opens my heart, making my every thought, word and deed bear **fruit that endures to eternity**. I ask that everything in my life serve Christ's Great Work of Reconciliation.*