



# Session 5

Lord Jesus Christ,  
I want to grow in  
heartfelt knowledge,  
love, and imitation of  
you.

## The Examen: an Ignatian Prayer Method

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer.

- 1.** Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding to see your day through God's loving eyes.
- 2.** Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details, in "the gaps" in "between" moments..
- 3.** Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

- 4.** Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling— positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
- 5.** Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Listen to God respond in your life. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

## **Gospel Contemplation in the Spiritual Exercise Calming of the Storm (Mt. 8:23-27)**

### **Time Before**

1. *Whose presence?* I will be in the presence of God.
  
2. *What is my grace?* Lord Jesus Christ, I want to grow in heartfelt knowledge, love, and imitation of You.
  
3. *What is my passage?* I will prepare Mt. 8:23-27
  
4. *How long will I pray?* I will pray for 20 minutes. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, it is normally an hour.

### **Contemplating the Passage: Mt. 8:23-27**

Then he got into the boat followed by his disciples. Without warning a storm broke over the lake, so violent that the waves were breaking right over the boat. But he was asleep. So they went to him and woke him saying, "Save us, Lord, we are going to drown!" And he said to them, "Why are you so frightened, you men of little faith?" And with that he stood up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and all was calm again. The men were astounded and said, "Whatever kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him."

**The time after is for the Review of Prayer.** This is where discernment takes place. It is when one is 'reading the signs' that God brought up in the prayer time and trying to understand their deeper meaning. Take 5 minutes for the review. In the Sp. Ex., it is normally 15 minutes.

The discerning process has two steps:

- I. What are the signs God gave me during the prayer time?
  1. What did I like?
  2. What did I not like?

3. What new insights did I have?
- II. What do these signs mean?
1. What did I learn about the God, the Son, or the Spirit?
  2. What did I learn about myself?
  3. What did I learn about our present relationship?
  4. What is my next step for growing in this relationship?

## PRAYING WITH IGNATIUS-SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL HOME PRAYER SELECTIONS

### Week 5

**PREPARE:** Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage, and become mindful of the Presence of God.

**GRACE SOUGHT:** Lord Jesus Christ, I want to grow in heartfelt knowledge, love, and imitation of you.

**Pray:**

Mark 1: 14-15                      The Kingdom is at hand

Luke 5:1-11 OR  
John 1:29-51                      The Call of the Apostles

John 2:1-11                      Wedding Feast of Cana

The Call of Jesus to You                      (Handout)

Matthew 5:1-12                      Sermon on the Mount

Pray the Examen every day

## Review of Prayer:

1. What did you like? What resonated with you?
2. What didn't you like? Where did you feel resistance?
3. Did you experience and spiritual insight? Delight?

1. What was revealed of God?
2. What was revealed of yourself?
3. What is being revealed of your relationship with God?

## THE CALL OF JESUS TO YOU

I. Jesus' incredible gift to you: YOURSELF as you are.

### A. WHO ARE YOU?

1. How would you describe yourself to another? What is your personality like? How likeable are you? Loveable?
  - If you could use three words to describe yourself, what would they be? Why?
2. List your strengths, giftedness, and virtues-anything you like about yourself-your abilities, your skills, your dreams, and desires.
  - Consider your gifts of nature: physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual.
3. Now list your weaknesses, your poverty, your enemies within-anything you wish were different about yourself, anything that you keep hidden from others-your fears, your insecurities, your vulnerabilities, your secrets.

B. Now, put all of the above together. Do you see that this is the TOTAL you? That this is the YOU that Jesus knows, understands, and accepts-That this is the YOU that He loves with an everlasting love.

II. In the light of your retreat experience so far, and in light of the above-and in the light of that incredible love that Jesus has for you as you exist at this moment-the combination of saint and sinner, the conglomeration of virtues and vices, the paradox of beauty and the beast-that you, which He wouldn't change one bit-What do you hear Him saying about you? How is Jesus describing you? What does He think and feel about you? LISTEN!

A. How do you respond to what Jesus says and feels about you?

B. In the light of the above, what do you hear Jesus asking of you? LISTEN!

C. Finally, how do you respond to His love? To His request? To His call?