

St. Peter Catholic Church

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen

Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day

This guide was developed by St. Peter Ignatian Spirituality Team members to be used as a companion course to: *“Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day”*
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The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day* Week 1

Introduction

The Prayer of the Ignatian Examen workshop is a 4-week small group program that explores how one particular prayer in the Ignatian tradition, the Examen, can help us to grow in our communion with the divine and help us to recognize how God is active in our everyday lives. St. Ignatius of Loyola, mystic and founder of the Jesuits, once called the prayer the most important quarter of an hour of the day. As a matter of fact, one of the few rules that St. Ignatius made for the Jesuits was that they pray it twice daily, at noon and at the end of the day. This retreat is appropriate for those who do not yet know the prayer of the Examen and wish to learn it as well as those who do know of it and wish to have a deeper understanding.

You may be wondering why we call this experience a retreat. We typically think of a retreat as an intentional time away, in a new environment, to experience a new awareness of the presence of God. Although we are not spending time at some wonderful retreat house in the mountains or at the beach, during these 4-weeks we invite you to see your life in a new way. We will take a break from our rush to live life forward with little appreciation or consciousness of yesterday or even this morning and examine how God is present in our lives in every moment.

What to Expect: Retreat Overview

The small group will meet weekly to pray together and to share what has happened in our prayer over the week. During the week you will be asked to pray the Examen at least once daily and to journal about that experience. You will be asked to read a chapter or two from *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for our Lives Today* by Timothy Gallagher, O.V.M. In addition, each week there is a different “listening” exercise that focuses on enhancing our skills at recognizing the Holy Spirit in the everyday.

You will also have a different listening exercise each week. Typically, it will take about 30 minutes daily for the Examen prayer and journaling and another hour or two each week to do the reading and the weekly listening exercise. The week 3 exercise includes having a conversation with some individuals who have been channels of God’s love for you. Because of the need to coordinate schedules, this step may take longer than the usual weekly listening exercise.

The Weekly Meeting

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Pulse Check (10 minutes)

Holy Listening (30-40 minutes)

Preview of the Reading and Prayer Exercise for Next Week (5-10 minutes)

Announcements (2-5 minutes)

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Who was St. Ignatius of Loyola?

St. Ignatius (1491-1556) was a Spanish priest who founded the religious order The Society of Jesus. He was a talented spiritual director. As evidenced in his *Spiritual Diary*, he developed a profound sensitivity

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to God's promptings over time by reflecting on both his own experience and that of his spiritual directees.

As a young man he was much attracted to the military life and to the idea of gaining fame for his exploits. He participated in many battles but in 1521, in the service of the viceroy of Navarre, he was called to assist in the defense of a section of Navarre claimed by the French. In the process of resisting the assault against Pamplona he was badly injured when a cannonball hit him in the legs, wounding his right leg and fracturing the left in multiple places.

Ignatius was returned to his father's castle in Loyola, where without anesthesia, he underwent several surgical operations to repair his legs, having the bones set and then re-broken. In the end these operations left one leg shorter than the other. He would limp for the rest of his life, and his military career was ended.

During his recovery from surgery, he underwent a spiritual conversion which led to his experiencing a call to religious life. During his recuperation he asked for reading material about the romances of chivalry however all that was available were two books: one on the life of Christ and the other a collection of lives of the saints arranged according to the order of their feasts throughout the Church year.

As he lay in bed, his thoughts alternated between how he might achieve worldly glory and the following of Christ. When he thought of his future life in terms of serving an exalted lady at court and performing great feats of arms, he was initially delighted, as he also was when he contemplated the exploits of St. Francis and St. Dominic as models to be followed. But there was a difference. The secular romances left a certain dryness and restlessness in their wake, whereas the sacred scenarios left him peaceful and contented even after his attention turned to other things.

He was at that time trying to make a decision about what to do with the rest of his life: would he return to court and continue to pursue worldly glory, or would he dedicate himself to following Christ in a spirit of poverty? He chose the latter and what follows is about 20 years in which he composed the core of the Spiritual Exercises.

He left the castle of Loyola, traveled to the Marian shrine at Montserrat, located at an abbey high above Barcelona. After an all-night vigil before the altar of the Virgin Mary he made a general confession to a monk of the community, exchanged his rich garments with the rags of a beggar and settled in the nearby town of Manresa with the intention of writing some spiritual reflections.

He remained at Manresa for 11 months as a solitary hermit in a cave, living by handouts as a beggar and making the exercises he was to describe in his *Spiritual Diary*. He made a pilgrimage to the holy land and recognized that he needed to study much so that he could have an effective apostolate. He dedicated the next few years to study first in Spain and then with much greater success at the University of Paris.

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It was in Paris that he gathered a group of half a dozen fellow students who all took vows of poverty and chastity in 1534. Although not yet Jesuits these men made *The Spiritual Exercises* under Ignatius and so their lives were revolutionized by the experience.

Key characteristics of Ignatian spirituality are that it:

- Is a spirituality for everyday life.
- Insists that God is present in our world and active in our lives.
- Is a pathway to deeper prayer, good decisions guided by keen discernment and an active life of service to others.

Check out this YouTube video by Fr. James Martin, S.J. on the life of St. Ignatius:

https://youtu.be/h4ZLuk_X8u0

Why pray the Examen?

The Examen prayer is the daily search to find where God's love is active this day, where God's love is leading today, to discern what within me may be resisting that leading, and to discover the growth to which God is calling me tomorrow so that this deepest desire can be increasingly fulfilled. Nothing in the spiritual life can replace a prayer that seeks this awareness of God's daily leading in our lives.¹

Humans have a deep desire for communion with God. We feed that desire through praying with scripture, liturgical prayer, spiritual reading and other forms of prayer. One of the resistances to the Examen is our focus on living life forward. We are creatures of the moment and of the next moment. We respond to our spontaneous urges without reflecting on whether these urges are leading us to or away from God. So the Examen provides a space for slowing, for examining our lives and for receiving the gift of God with us right now, for correcting our course if needed and for inviting the Spirit to be with us tomorrow.

¹ Gallagher, Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V. *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Co., 2006) 36.

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Group Examen: Questions for Reflection

Having spent time remembering we respond. Take a minute or two to journal or pray about your experience. Express your thoughts, feelings, attitudes.

How was this experience of remembering for you?

What were your feelings, thoughts, attitudes?

How do you want to live differently?

What patterns do you want to keep for tomorrow (or today)?

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Week 1 Assignment:

1. Pray the Examen at least once daily for 15 minutes. Journal about your experience. If you are new to the Examen, focus on praying the traditional Examen. Once comfortable with the format (after 4 or 5 days), check the Contents page (v) of the *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* book for an Examen that piques your interest or intersects with a particular need. Following are some prompts for your journaling:
 - How was my prayer experience today? Was I able to enter easily into the prayer? Were there agitations?
 - What was the setting for my prayer (time of day, environment, etc.)? Did it help or hinder my prayer?
 - What insight(s) did my prayer bring?
 - St. Ignatius said that once we find what we are seeking in our prayer, that we may “rest, without anxiety to move forward until my heart is satisfied.”² What, if anything, was particularly compelling in your prayer today?
 - Are there any themes that I see repeating in my prayer?
2. Read the handout entitled “First Step: Gratitude” (pages 57-67) from the book *Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* by Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V.
3. Complete the “Writing a Letter to God” exercise.
4. **On the day prior to (or the morning of)** your Ignatian Prayer of the Examen group meeting, pray the Weekly Review Examen that is page 17 of this Participant Guide. Journal about your experience.

² Gallagher, Timothy O.M.V. , 105.

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How God speaks to us

God speaks in many ways. Throughout scripture, He speaks through His prophets, through the writers of Scripture and most graciously, He speaks through His Son. In the scriptures there are cases where God speaks quite audibly. His presence is announced through fire (Exodus 19:18), a whirlwind (Job 38:1), in a voice that sounds like thunder (1 Samuel 2:10; Job 37:2; Psalm 104:7; John 12:29), both thunder and a whirlwind (Psalm 77:18) and in Revelation 4:5 we read that lightning and thunder proceed from the throne in heaven.

For most of us He speaks in the quiet of our hearts as we read the scriptures, engage in spiritual reading and participate in holy liturgy. The Examen challenges us to look in our hearts and to find God in our everyday life.

In the book of Kings we read the story of Elijah, who having just defeated the prophets of the false god Baal, is on the run for his life from Jezebel, wife of King Ahab. He is likely in a state of extreme fear and anxiousness. He is standing on Mount Horeb, as the Lord has instructed him, waiting to hear Him speak. In the book of Kings we read the story of Elijah who having just defeated the prophets of the false god Baal is on the run from Jezebel, wife of King Ahab. The Lord instructs him to go to Mount Horeb where Elijah stands waiting to hear Him speak.

The Lord sends a mighty wind which breaks the rocks in pieces; then an earthquake and a fire, but His voice is in none of them. After all that, the Lord speaks to Elijah in a still small voice, or “gentle whisper.”

Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD - the LORD will pass by. There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake; after the earthquake, fire—but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, a light silent sound. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

God speaks to Elijah in the **silence**.

The work of God need not always be accompanied by dramatic revelation or manifestations. Divine silence does not necessarily mean divine inactivity.

What is Holy Listening?

Holy Listening is a way of listening to one another for the movement of God. It is as exercise in listening deeply. We listen to what is being said, to what is not said and for how the Holy Spirit is moving us as we listen. So how do we accomplish this? We listen without comment; we observe silence and let the Spirit speak to us.

It is a practice in which we let the other person speak without commenting, asking questions, offering advice or talking about our own experience. In Holy Listening we ask the question: How is the Spirit moving within me through the words and experience of this other person?

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Holy Listening is very different from how we listen in our day-to-day lives. We are surrounded by so much noise that it feels weird when there is silence. "It's too quiet," we say. So we willingly invite manufactured sound into our lives by turning on the TV or radio just for "company." We listen to music, podcasts, audio books so we don't have to be alone with our own thoughts even for a second. And sometimes we are engaged with the sound and are actually hearing, but often we are not -and there are no consequences for this disengagement.

In our one-on-one interactions such as with a friend or a colleague we may also be hearing but not listening. As the other person is talking, we are evaluating, weighing and formulating our response. So our listening habits have resulted in a kind of deafness – where we hear the sound but not the message. We grasp neither the text nor the sub-text.

Holy Listening Guidelines

- Each person in the circle responds to the given question or topic. The circle moves in a clockwise fashion.
- Our job as listeners is to note how the Spirit is moving with the speaker and in ourselves. Listeners may wish to take brief notes. Note anything that the Spirit stirs up in you such as a(n):
 - image
 - pattern
 - insight
 - scripture
- When the circle is completed listeners offer any insights starting with the person to the right of the first person who spoke
- Use "I" language. For example: "I had the image of a stormy sky..." "I was reminded of the scripture of the woman at the well..."
- Focus on how the Spirit moved in you.
- Avoid giving advice or problem solving.

Holy Listening Focus Questions

This past week we did the daily Examen, we journaled, we wrote a letter to God and read a short chapter on the first Examen step - Gratitude.

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of one thing that moved or surprised you.

Did you experience a particular stress?

Did you have any special experience of God?

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The Examen – A Tool for Discernment

The Examen prayer is above all a tool for discernment. In the prayer we take a look at our day and identify the spiritual experience that has been there, to see where God has been, how we have responded to it, where our response has been less than God would have wanted so that with God, we can begin to plan to respond more fully tomorrow and in the future. We can also see ways during the course of the day that we have given in to what Ignatius refers to as the discouraging desolations of the enemy. The result of this examination of our day gives us light on how to achieve greater spiritual fruit in the future.

An Introduction to Discernment of Spirits

from IgnatianSpirituality.com³

St. Ignatius of Loyola began to learn about the discernment of spirits while convalescing from serious battle injuries. He noticed different interior movements as he imagined his future. In his autobiography, Ignatius writes (in the third person):

He did not consider nor did he stop to examine this difference until one day his eyes were partially opened and he began to wonder at this difference and to reflect upon it. From experience he knew that some thoughts left him sad while others made him happy, and little by little he came to perceive the different spirits that were moving him; one coming from the devil, the other coming from God (Autobiography, no. 8).

Good and Evil Spirits

Ignatius believed that these interior movements were caused by “good spirits” and “evil spirits.” We want to follow the action of a good spirit and reject the action of an evil spirit. Discernment of spirits is a way to understand God’s will or desire for us in our life.

Talk of good and evil spirits may seem foreign to us. Psychology gives us other names for what Ignatius called good and evil spirits. Yet Ignatius’s language is useful because it recognizes the reality of evil. Evil is both greater than we are and part of who we are. Our hearts are divided between good and evil impulses. To call these “spirits” simply recognizes the spiritual dimension of this inner struggle.

³ <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/discernment-of-spirits/introduction-to-discernment-of-spirits/>

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Consolation and Desolation

The feelings stirred up by good and evil spirits are called “consolation” and “desolation” in the language of Ignatian spirituality.

Spiritual consolation is an experience of being so on fire with God’s love that we feel impelled to praise, love, and serve God and help others as best as we can. Spiritual consolation encourages and facilitates a deep sense of gratitude for God’s faithfulness, mercy, and companionship in our life. In consolation, we feel more alive and connected to others.

Spiritual desolation, in contrast, is an experience of the soul in heavy darkness or turmoil. We are assaulted by all sorts of doubts, bombarded by temptations, and mired in self- preoccupations. We are excessively restless and anxious and feel cut off from others. Such feelings, in Ignatius’s words, “move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love.”

The key question in interpreting consolation and desolation is: *where is the movement coming from and where is it leading me?* Spiritual consolation does not always mean happiness. Spiritual desolation does not always mean sadness. Sometimes an experience of sadness is a moment of conversion and intimacy with God. Times of human suffering can be moments of great grace. Similarly, peace or happiness can be illusory if these feelings are helping us avoid changes we need to make.

Rules for Discernment

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius provides various rules for the discernment of spirits. Good and evil spirits operate according to the spiritual condition of the individual.

For people who have closed themselves off from God’s grace, the good spirit disturbs and shakes up. It stirs feelings of remorse and discontent. The purpose is to make the person unhappy with a sinful way of life. On the other hand, the evil spirit wants such people to continue in their confusion and darkness. So the evil spirit tries to make them complacent, content, and satisfied with their distractions and pleasures.

For people who are trying to live a life pleasing to God, the good spirit strengthens, encourages, consoles, removes obstacles, and gives peace. The evil spirit tries to derail them by stirring up anxiety, false sadness, needless confusion, frustration, and other obstacles.

Discernment of spirits is a challenging task. It requires maturity, inner quiet, and an ability to reflect on one’s interior life. Discernment takes practice. It is something of an art. Ignatius Loyola’s rules for discernment provide a framework, not a program. We must be ready to improvise and adjust because God works in each of us so uniquely. That is why most counselors recommend undertaking discernment of spirits with the assistance of a spiritual director.

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Types of Interior Awareness⁴

Ignatius distinguishes three different types of interior awareness that point us to the spiritual awareness that is the focus of the discernment of spirits. In modern thought these awareness are understood as:

- **Psychological Awareness** – This type of awareness is thoughts explored in professional counseling, in feedback from friends, our own effort to notice how we are feeling as we experience in the events of the day, reflection on our interactions with others, and similar means. We may find that in certain situations we behave in patterns. For example we become habitually fearful or angry, feel more or less secure, find ourselves uplifted or discouraged, and tend to act accordingly. This greater awareness regarding our individual psychological patterns and their causes leads to greater clarity and freedom in making emotionally healthy choices, with increased clarity for the tasks of our life.

- **Moral Awareness** – This type of interior awareness involves being “within” that permits us to grasp the moral quality of our lives. How faithful or unfaithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ are our actions, our words, our choices, and our relationships with others? Are we living according to the Sermon on the Mount, the New Commandment, to Paul’s description of the qualities of love? This is the moral awareness that we seek at the beginning of each Eucharist, when we approach the sacrament of reconciliation, or any time we confront our lives with the word of God. It is born of a love for Christ.

- **Spiritual Awareness** – Discernment of spirits focuses on this awareness. This is an awareness that points our thoughts to God. The initial awareness may be psychological in nature and then move to the spiritual. For example, Ignatius notes that when he thinks of one type of project, it leaves him “dry and discontented” (i.e., doing great deeds in order to win the favor of a Lady) whereas thinking of another type of project (i.e., following the example of the saints), leaves him “contented and happy.” While he is experiencing discontent or happiness his awareness is not limited to the psychological level alone. Ignatius is aware that these repeating affective patterns are directly related to his Christian life and contain a message regarding the direction in which the Lord is leading him in life...**Ignatius’s experience, teaches him that certain movements among the many that stir in our hearts have special significance for our life of faith and our pursuit of god’s will.**

⁴ Gallagher 22-23

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Three Steps to the Discernment of Spirits⁵

The Examen is a tool that helps us discern our interior movements. We do this in the Examen by:

Being aware: Noticing what is happening in our inner spiritual experience, what is spiritually stirring in our hearts and thoughts.

Understanding: Reflecting on the stirrings we have now noticed allows us to recognize what in them is of God and what is not.

Taking Action: Accepting and living according to what we have recognized as of God, and rejecting and removing from our lives what we have recognized as not of God.

⁵ The Discernment of Spirits, Fr. Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V. 17

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Week 2 Assignment

1. Pray the Examen at least once daily for 15 minutes. Journal about your experience.
 - a) The Examen is a tool to look over the course of our own day to see when we may have given in to the discouraging desolations of the enemy or the “evil spirits” and as a result gain insight into how to achieve greater spiritual freedom in the coming days. Pray Examen 13, “Thoughts, Words, Deeds” a couple of times this week:
 - Focus on the “Thoughts” steps (1-5). Journal the thoughts that you had throughout the day, making note of any feelings that are associated with these thoughts such as annoyance, fear, sadness, tenderness, joy, love, etc. The “Words” and “Deeds” portion of the prayer (steps 6 & 7) are optional.
 - Conclude with steps 8-10.
 - b) Check the Contents page (v) of the *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* book for other Examen that pique your interest or intersect with a particular need. Following are some prompts for your journaling:
 - How was my prayer experience today? Was I able to enter easily into the prayer? Were there agitations?
 - What was the setting for my prayer (time of day, environment, etc.)? Did it help or hinder my prayer?
 - What insight(s) did my prayer bring?
 - St. Ignatius said that once we find what we are seeking in our prayer, that we may “rest, without anxiety to move forward until my heart is satisfied.” What, if anything, was particularly compelling in your prayer today?
 - Are there any themes that I see repeating in my prayer?
2. Read the handouts entitled “Second Step: Petition” (pages 68-74) and “Third Step: Review” (pages 75-86) from *Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* by Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V.
3. Complete the “God Sighting Map” exercise.
4. **On the day prior to (or the morning of)** your Ignatian Prayer of the Examen group meeting, pray the Weekly Review Examen that is on page 17 of this Participant Guide. Journal about your experience.

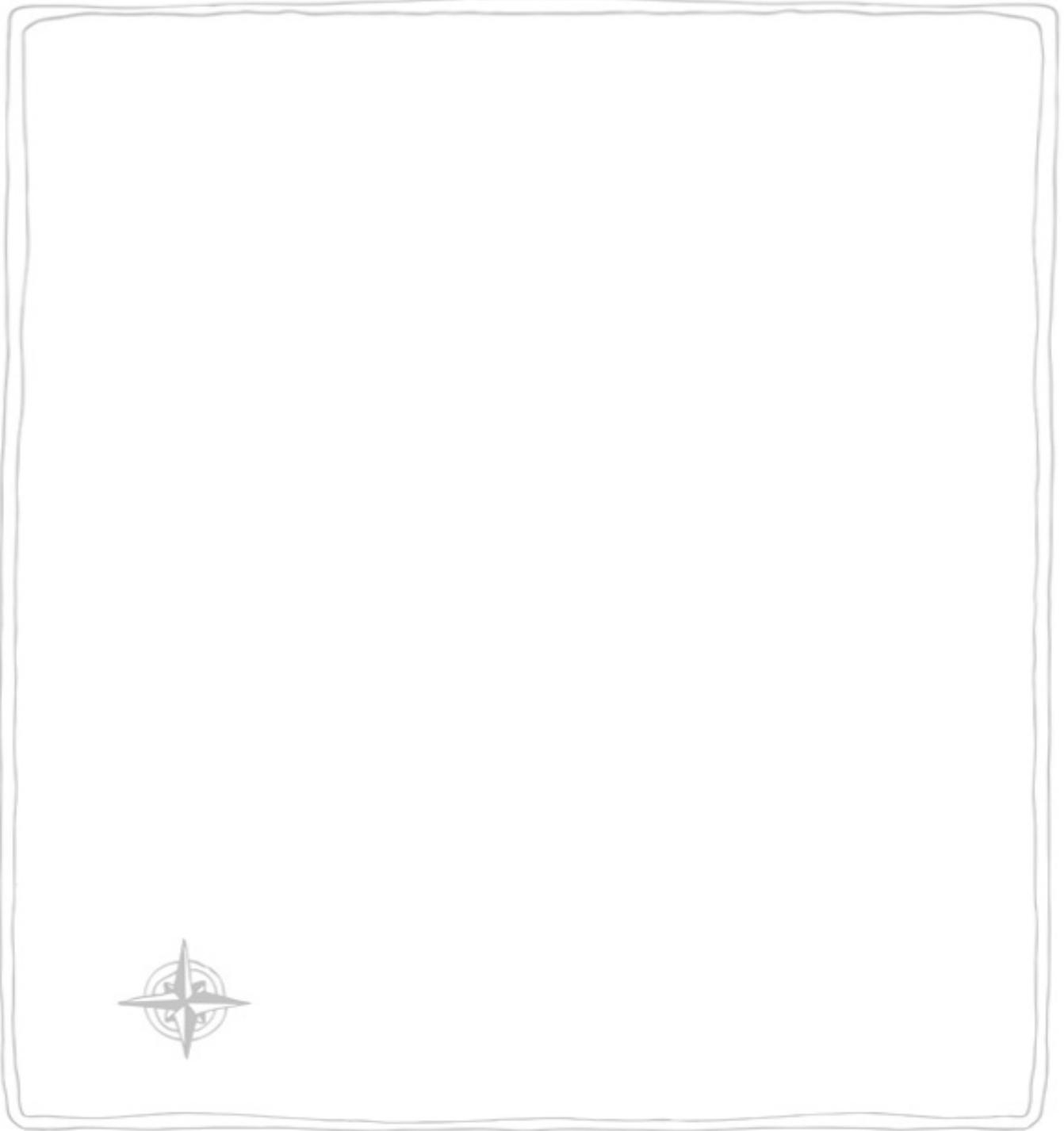


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WEEK TWO

This week, create your own “God Sighting Map,” which locates God’s presence and activity in your surroundings and in your interactions with others. Start close to home, then move out into your neighborhood and community. Who or what has been a sign of God’s love to you today? Where do you see God at work?



Draw a few landmarks to orient your day. Make notes on this map of different places, encounters, situations, in which you felt, or recognized or perceived God at work in some situation, in some place of need, in some interaction with another.

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day Week 3

Holy Listening Focus Questions

This past week we did the daily Examen, we journaled, we completed a God Sighting Map and read a chapter on the second and third steps of the Examen - petition and review.

- How was the God Sighting Map exercise or the Examen for you?
- Focus on an emotion or a feeling, especially in relation to God. What moved you? Did anything affect you in a special or unexpected way?
- Did you experience a particular stress?
- Did you have any special experience of God?

The Holy Listening Process

- Each person in the circle responds to the given question or topic. The circle moves in a clockwise fashion.
- Our job as listeners is to note how the Spirit is moving with the speaker and in ourselves. Listeners may wish to take brief notes. Note anything that comes up for you such as a(n):
 - image
 - description
 - pattern
 - insight
 - scripture
- When the circle is completed listeners offer any insights starting with the person to the right of the first person who spoke
- Use “I” language. For example: “I had the image of a stormy sky...” “I was reminded of the scripture of the woman at the well...”
- Focus on how the Spirit moved in you.
- Avoid giving advice or problem solving.

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Week 3**

Channels of God's Grace

As we look back at our lives there are people whose presence has blessed us, people who have been channels of God's grace for us and have shown us the love of God. These people may have been family members, teachers, friends, co-workers. Write down the names of some people who have played this role in your life. Challenge yourself to identify 10 individuals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day* Week 3

Week 3 Assignment

1. Pray the Examen at least once daily for 15 minutes. Journal about your experience. Check the Contents page (v) of the *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* book for an Examen that piques your interest or intersects with a particular need. Following are some prompts for your journaling:
 - How was my prayer experience today? Was I able to enter easily into the prayer? Were there agitations?
 - What was the setting for my prayer (time of day, environment, etc.)? Did it help or hinder my prayer?
 - What insight(s) did my prayer bring?
 - St. Ignatius said that once we find what we are seeking in our prayer, that we may “rest, without anxiety to move forward until my heart is satisfied.” What, if anything, was particularly compelling in your prayer today?
 - Are there any themes that I see repeating in my prayer?
2. Read the handouts entitled “Fourth Step: Forgiveness” (pages 87-94) and “Fifth Step: Renewal” (pages 95-102) from *Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* by Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V.
3. Complete the “Listening Hand” exercise.

Tips for Completing the Listening Hand Exercise

- **Contact the persons that you want to interview for the exercise as soon as possible.** Reference the individuals that you identified on the previous page who have been channels of God’s grace for you. Identify the individuals that you would like to interview. Invite them to lunch. Or just call and say, “We haven’t chatted in awhile and I would like to catch up.”
- **Ask an easy question:** Depending on the individual, asking “How did you come to know God’s love?” may be difficult to answer. Asking the question in a less direct way, however, can achieve the same goal. Consider the question that Krista Tippet of the NPR radio show *On Being* asks most of her guests: “What is the spiritual background of your childhood?” As the subjects describe their spiritual roots, they move from past to present thus painting a fairly complete picture of their relationship with the divine. You might ask a question relevant to your shared experience such as: “How did you come to be involved in this ministry?” “When did you join this order?” “What led you to be involved with this organization?”
- **Listen:** This is the easy part. If you’re lucky, your interviewee will have plenty to say about a subject that they know a lot about – themselves.

4. **On the day prior to (or the morning of) your Prayer of the Prayer of the Ignatian Examen meeting,** pray the Weekly Review Examen that is on page 17. Journal about your experience.

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Holy Listening Focus Questions

This past week we had conversations with individuals who have been channels of God's grace in our lives. Focus on one interview and describe what stood out for you.

The Holy Listening Process

- Each person in the circle responds to the given question or topic. The circle moves in a clockwise fashion.
- Our job as listeners is to note how the Spirit is moving with the speaker and in ourselves. Listeners may wish to take brief notes. Note anything that comes up for you such as a(n):
 - image
 - description
 - pattern
 - insight
 - scripture
- When the circle is completed listeners offer any insights starting with the person to the right of the first person who spoke
- Use "I" language. For example: "I had the image of a stormy sky..." "I was reminded of the scripture of the woman at the well..."
- Focus on how the Spirit moved in you.
- Avoid giving advice or problem solving.



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WEEK THREE

The third week's activity, "Listening Hand," invites us to listen and learn. Who has been a channel of God's grace for you? In conversation or over email this week, reach out to five people to find out how they came to know God's love. How does the Good News shape the way they live? How might their stories invite you to express your own?



Trace your hand on this paper. On each fingertip write the name of one person whose life inspires you. Try to contact each of them. How did they come to know God's love? What for them is "the Good News of God's Kingdom"? How does this Good News shape the way they live? As you listen, record significant ideas, words or phrases on the palm of the hand drawing.

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Weekly Review Examen**

1. I begin in my usual way.
2. I spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big and small, that I've received today.
3. I ask the Lord to show me what I need to see as I review my journal of the past week. I highlight anything that stands out for me. Am I finding any patterns? What insights do I have? I make a few notes in my journal so that I may bring these insights into Holy Listening.
4. As I review my week, I continue to thank God for all the gifts that I find in it. I pause at any of the difficult moments of the week and pay attention to missed opportunities when I was not fully the person I am called to be. I stop and ask forgiveness from God.
5. With what I have learned during this prayer time about myself and my life, I ask God to show me, concretely, how he wants me to respond or what he wants me to do tomorrow. I ask God to show me what kind of person God is calling me to be tomorrow and I resolve to be that person. I ask God's help to be the person I'm called to be.
6. I end in my usual way.

Adapted from: Mark E. Thibodeaux, S.J. "Traditional Ignatian Examen" in *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* (Chicago, Loyola Press 1975) 3-4 .

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day* Catholic Retreat Centers

St. Ignatius knew from experience that making time for God is critical to the spiritual life. Some of his most powerful mystical experiences occurred while he was away from routine daily activities and was enveloped in silence – take for instance his long convalescence or his time at Manresa. In fact, Ignatius considered making time and space for God so important that he required that his followers make a full silent retreat each year accompanied by his guidance in the Spiritual Exercises.

Making a yearly retreat is of critical importance in the spiritual life. However, if you're not able to take a full 30 days, there are plenty of opportunities within driving distance to find a retreat that meets your interest and schedule.

Ignatius House Jesuit Retreat Center

6700 Riverside Drive NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30328
404-255-0503
www.ignatiushouse.org

Catholic Diocese of Charlotte -Catholic Conference Center

<https://catholicconference.org/contact-us/>
1551 Trinity Lane
Hickory, NC 28602
Phone: [828-327-7441](tel:828-327-7441)
info@catholicconference.org

Catholic Diocese of Raleigh - Avila Retreat Center

<http://avila-retreat-center.com/>
711 Mason Rd, Durham, NC 27712
[\(919\) 477-1285](tel:919-477-1285)

St Francis Springs

<http://www.stfrancissprings.com/>
477 Grogan Road • Stoneville, North Carolina
27048
P: [336.573.3751](tel:336-573-3751)
email: info@stfrancissprings.com

The Rock Hill Oratory

<http://www.rockhilloratory.net/>
434 Charlotte Ave, Rock Hill, 29730
[\(803\) 327-2097](tel:803-327-2097)

Well of Mercy

<http://www.wellofmercy.org/contact>
181 Mercy Lane
Hamptonville, NC 27020-7199
Phone: [\(704\) 539-5449](tel:704-539-5449)

