

## Parish Examen Overview

Considering the current province apostolic discernment process, UMI Parishes are invited to initiate an **Examen of their Ignatian character**. The Examen will consist of three parts:

1. An honest and thorough self-assessment of the current Ignatian charism;
2. A reflection on that assessment, leading to a discernment of growth in Ignatian charism;
3. A statement of commitments the parish is willing to make to grow in the Ignatian charism and how the province may be of help in those initiatives.

At minimum, the process invites priest(s), parish staff, and pastoral council to participate. For the sake of doing an honest and thorough self-assessment, Parishes may wish to expand participation to include other Parish leaders.

### Part One | Assessing current reality

Utilizing questions which invite reflection upon the Ignatian Charism, participants are encouraged to be as honest and open as possible. Participants should be reminded that these questions are not an evaluation, but a stimulus for discerning how the parish might be called to grow in its Ignatian character. The process should stimulate reflection and creativity, not fear and defensiveness.

These characteristics are essential for a Jesuit parish: the faith that does justice; collaboration; Ignatian spirituality; liturgy, worship, and community life; and faith formation. The self-assessment will include reflection upon these characteristics and the guiding documents which serve as standards.

Participants and parishioners do not need to bring expertise in the documents or in all the characteristics; this Examen is an opportunity for education and formation around Jesuit identity. Additionally, the pastor is encouraged to create an environment conducive to safe and open sharing, which may include recusing himself from certain conversations.

### Part Two | Reflecting on insights generated

The second part invites participants to reflect more deeply on the content generating through Part One. Questions may include: What are the strengths/weaknesses of the Ignatian charism of your Parish? In which areas might your Parish be called by the Spirit to grow its Ignatian charism?

### Part Three | Committing to Ignatian charism

The final part invites Parish leadership to make some commitments around how specifically they plan on deepening the Parish's Ignatian character. Building on Parts One and Two, participants might reflect, and come to consensus, on how specifically they want their Parish to incarnate the Ignatian charism. Participants may ask themselves how the province might help them realize these commitments to deepen their Ignatian character.

### Format and Process

The specific format and process will be determined in conversation with the Pastoral Assistant(s) and Pastor to find a method and time-frame which is achievable. Conceptually, the process could involve preliminary individual/group reflection and conversation amongst participants (Part One), a full-day facilitated conversation with Pastoral Assistant(s) (Part Two), and a follow-up experience which weaves together the commitments and the process (Part Three).