

Daily Examination of Conscience—“Examen”

An important part of any healthy rule of life is self-examination under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in relationship with your Spiritual Father or Mother. This is an ancient and simple method of helping you call to mind what you have seen, heard, understood, tasted and touched of God in the day that is drawing to a close. It is a “tried and true” way to assist you in living a life of “holy attention” or “mindfulness”. It is a wonderful asset in attaining the attitude of “unceasing prayer”.

The examination of conscience is a way of “collecting with compassion and truthfulness” the day you have lived. It is not “reminiscing” or simply “remembering”. We desire the grace of illumination from the Holy Spirit to see how the Lord has been working in our life during the day and our responsiveness or lack of it to Him.

As the Great Thanksgiving says, “It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you...” Our attitude is to be one of gratitude. Each of us loves to receive gifts and not only has the day been a gift, but our examination of it will be as well. We need not fear the truth regarding our day because the Lord would never show us anything that was not intended and empowered with the ability to heal and enliven.

Take a few minutes *in conjunction* with your bedtime devotions, after you prepare for bed and stand or kneel beside your bed.

1. Take time to collect and offer yourself to God.
2. Thank God for the gift of this day and for all the blessings of it – known and unknown
3. Ask for the special grace of guidance to recognize the Lord’s work in your life during the day and see your transgressions of His Commandments
4. Slowly and gently review the day in sections (morning, afternoon, and evening) or by interactions (appointments encounters, etc.). Do not enter into this review with a spirit of condemnation. Rather, enter with a spirit of “truth in love” – mercy as a way of joining God in His attitude toward you and your day.
 - a. As you behold the Lord respond with “Lord God I thank you”
 - b. As you behold sinfulness on your part to His presence or prompting to action respond with “Lord God have mercy”
 - c. Our feelings and convictions, positive and negative, the painful and the pleasing, are signals of where the action of God or our response to it was during the day. Simply “pay attention” to the whole range of convictions and feelings as they surface – delight, boredom, fear, anticipation, resentment, anger, peace, contentment, impatience, desire, hope, despair, regret, uncertainty, confusion, compassion, disgust, gratitude, admiration, shyness, confidence, etc.
5. Ask for God’s grace in the one or two particular areas in which you recognize you need the touch of His transformative power. It is wise to limit the area in which you ask the Lord for transformation to one or two items to avoid a sense of being overwhelmed by sin.
 - a. Spontaneously ask for wisdom to illumine your darkened and establish within you a “sound mind”

- b. Spontaneously ask for healing to mend and strengthen your broken heart and heal it
 - c. Embrace what the Lord has shown you with an attitude of underlying trust that He is the author and provider of every “good and perfect gift” and what you have realized and experienced during this time is such a gift
6. Close your time with the Lord’s Prayer and the Gloria Patri (“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”).
 7. It is important to keep this discipline the same each night to guard against the influence of the darkened mind and the broken heart. As time goes on, the influence of these will decrease and the Lordship of the Holy Spirit will practically increase.
 8. The discipline should take no more than about 15-20 minutes. If things arise that you desire to explore more extensively, bring them to your Spiritual Father or Mother.