

# DAILY EXAMEN

The Ignatian Examen, or the Daily Examen, is a contemplative prayer led by memory. During an Examen, one reflects on the current day, focusing on memories from the events of the day as a way of recognizing God's Divine Presence.

Often, the Examen awakens the practitioner to the Divine through routine or ordinary moments to illustrate the subtle and surprising ways God speaks. This prayer practice helps cultivate and refine discernment as well as an awareness of God's presence. Traditionally, there are five movements or steps in the Examen. The following steps outlined below are adapted from the technique outlined in the [\*Spiritual Exercises\*](#) developed by Ignatius Loyola in the 16th century. St. Ignatius required his companions, the [Jesuits](#), to practice the Examen daily at noon and before turning in for sleep.

## Instruction:

1. Acknowledge an awareness of God's Presence.
2. Review the day in a posture of gratitude.
3. Recognize a "Consolation" and a "Desolation" from the day.
4. Choose a "Desolation" to pray into.
5. Look with hope for new tomorrow.

*A **consolation** is an experience that causes you to feel fully alive, at peace, joyful, happy, comforted, whole, connected, your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel close God.*

*A **desolation** is an experience that causes you to feel drained of energy, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, sorrowful, alone, isolated, unaccepted, fragmented, less than your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel far away from God.*

*The tricky thing about desolation is that even though it is an uncomfortable and sometimes distressing experience and we may feel as if God is far away, God is still very near. So the gift is praying with the desolation, telling God about your experience and asking for God's grace in the experience (it is also good to give God thanks for the consolation experiences). God shows up in desolations AND consolations. It's just that it's easier to "experience" God in consolations, and we often move away from God in desolations.*