

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Prayer of Examen

This prayer is a way of becoming aware of God's presence in our daily life. In reviewing the events, thoughts, actions, feelings and dreams of the past twenty-four hours, God invites us to notice occasions and patterns of mercy, even in times of transition and heartache. The God who created you also lovingly desires to be close to you through your grief as well as during your times of joy. The Prayer of Examen is attributed to the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola.

Steps of the Prayer of Examen

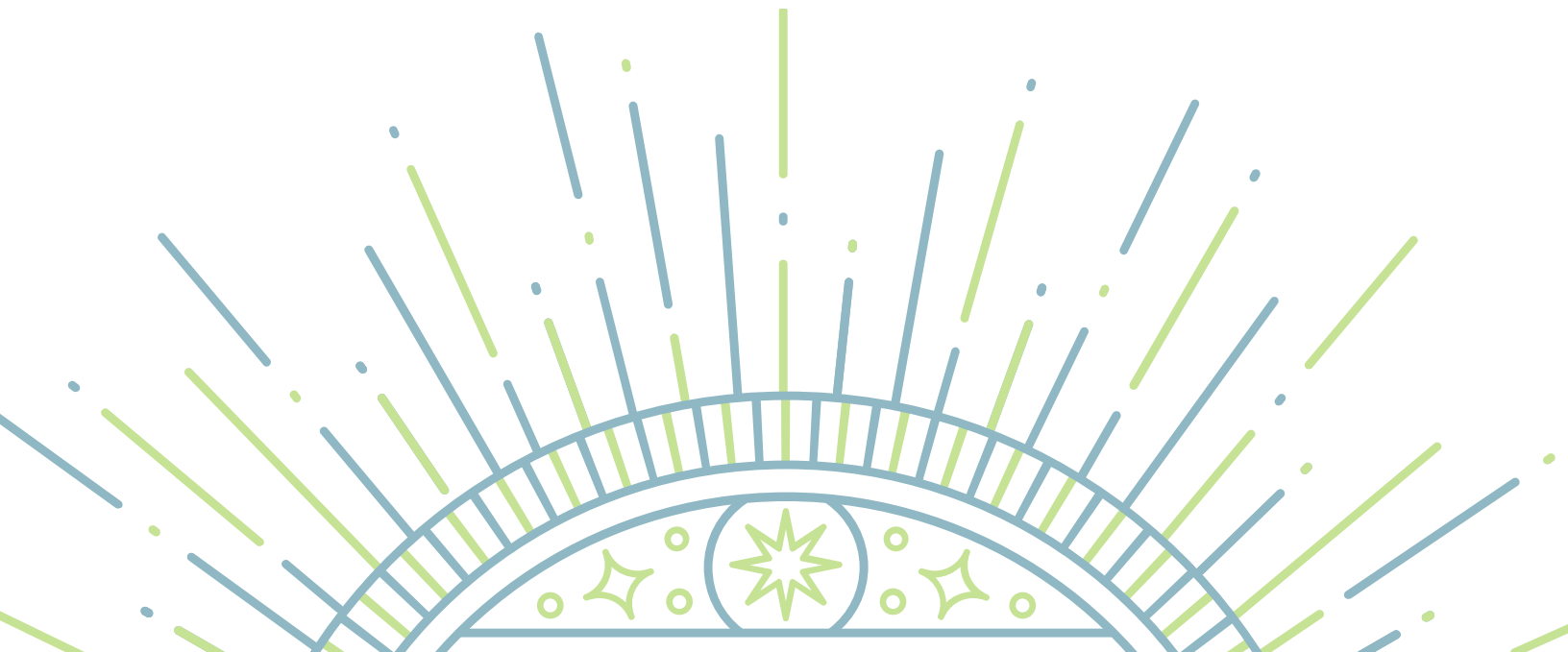
Look back through your day as if playing a movie in reverse. Give thanks for the events of the day. For what are you most grateful?

What do you wish was different?

Look forward to the day to come. Where do you most need God in the coming day?

Reflect on your experience of the Prayer of Examen.

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention.
Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day"*



SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Creating a Lament

Write your loss at the top of the paper provided. Using the “process” described below, write your own personal psalm of lament relating to your loss. You may use it exactly or you may write freeform. It is yours.

Be honest, be courageous, and don't hold back, for in those feelings and their expression you can find healing and hope in knowing that God is listening with unconditional love and abundant compassion for you. Imagine God saying to you, “I know you're disappointed/hurt/angry/sad...tell me about it.”

Address God

How do you address God? What do you call God?

Complaint

What is your complaint? What sadness, fear, pain or anger do you have that needs to be brought to God?

Affirm your trust in God

Has God been there for you in the past? What has been your experience of God's presence with you and what did you experience in that time?

Ask for your deepest desire

What do you most deeply desire from God in this time? Express your need and tell God why you want God's intervention? Are there people or situations in your life that feel threatening to you? How would you bring them to God? Psalmists in the past have reminded God of past situations when God came through for them. You may want to do that as well.

Assurance that you are heard

What do you need from God to feel that you have been heard in this prayer?

Gratitude and praise

Express your gratitude for God's presence in your life and all that you have experienced that has blessed you and for which you are thankful. Perhaps you can see in this situation of losing the blessing that God brought to your life through the person, the job, the role, etc.

These questions may guide you:

Who has helped you?

Where have you been able to find help?

What has given you hope?

What role has your faith played?

How and when have I experienced God's presence?

For whom or what are you grateful?

What qualities in yourself have you discovered that have helped you survive? What strengths have you found?

How has God dealt bountifully with you?

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Divine Light Meditation

Relax and take your time with it and let the light of this meditation embrace you.

Once you have settled on your cushion or chair, take several slow, deep breaths. Make a sound with each exhalation, letting go of the pressures of the day.

Now, begin to breathe regularly.

Breath in. Breath out.

With each inhalation, receive the light of the Divine.

Experience its beauty and boundless strength.

Its color, Its warmth, Its radiance

Its cascading creative energy.

With each breath in, the light of the Divine fills you.

It gives you a feeling of well-being

Clarity, Strength

With each exhalation, the light of the Divine passes through you.

Healing you, Cleansing you

Releasing the toxins of your everyday life.

With each in-breath, receiving the presence of divine light.

With each out-breath, experiencing the gift of divine light.

When your thoughts wander as they inevitably will, gently encircle them with light and return to the focus of the meditation.

Breath in. Breath out.

If you become distracted by a sound or a movement around you, notice it, then return to the focus of the meditation.

Divine light.

God's presence.

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