

DAILY EXAMEN in everyday life

SEEING GOD IN ALL THINGS

If your Band chooses to focus on the content of the Daily Examen in everyday life, using the Wholly/Holy Listening format for sharing would work well.

St. Ignatius wrote *The Spiritual Exercises*, which have guided retreatants for centuries. The Exercises begin by recommending that everyone be taught the *Examen* (pronounced ig-'zā-mən).

The examen is what changed Ignatius from a wild soldier to a pilgrim walking barefoot to Jerusalem. God is constantly revealing himself to us in our experience. Ignatius saw the examen as the cornerstone of spiritual life -- so much so that when others asked if they could skip their prayer exercise, he told them to skip anything but the Examen.

The Linns, authors of *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives you Life* state: *For many years, we have ended each day the same way. We light a candle, become aware of God's loving presence, and take about five minutes of quiet while we each ask ourselves two questions:*

For what moment today am I most grateful?
For what moment today am I least grateful?

There are many ways to ask the same questions:

- When was I happiest today? When was I saddest?
- What was today's high point? What was today's low point?
- What was my best part of the day? What was my worst part of the day?
- What was my biggest struggle? When was I distracted, agitated or angry?

The Examen Process

Preparation:

- **Light a candle if you wish.** The candle's flame symbolizes the light of divine revelation in our everyday experience.
- **Put your feet flat on the floor.**
- **Take a few deep breaths . . .** from the bottom of your toes, up through your legs, your abdominal muscles and your chest. Breathe in that *unconditional love*, and when you breathe out, fill the space around you with love. Do whatever helps you to experience unconditional love. For example, imagine yourself in a favorite place with someone you love and trust.
- **Place your hand on your heart**
 1. Ask God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are ***most grateful***. If you could re-live one moment, which one would it be? When were you most able to give and

2. receive love today? ----Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so special. Breathe in the gratitude you felt and receive life again from that moment.
3. Ask God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are *least grateful*. When were you least able to give and receive love? ----- Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Name it. Feel it. Appreciate that you are not denying it. Be with whatever you feel without trying to change or fix it in any way. Take a few deep breaths and let God's love fill you just as you are.
4. **Give thanks for *whatever*** you have experienced. If you are doing this with your family, share as much as you wish. Considering journaling briefly. This will help you begin to pay attention to your life in a brand new way. It will help you to notice patterns and habits ... for good or for bad.

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

— Psalm 139:23-24

One reason we light a candle

when we do the examen [which is OPTIONAL] is that the candle's flame symbolizes the light of divine revelation in our everyday experience. The gratitude questions we use are simply one way of discovering the day's consolation and desolation, the interior movements through which divine revelation unfolds.

Ignatius encouraged

his Jesuit theologians to do the daily examen as a way of listening for God's truth - as a way of becoming awake and aware of God's love, presence and movement in the story of their everyday lives.

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from *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives you Life* by Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn and Matthew Linn.