



## **PRACTICES** *Prayer of Examen*

The Prayer of Examen is a daily spiritual exercise developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatius encouraged followers of Jesus to use Examen prayer to deepen spiritual sensitivity and to recognize and receive the Holy Spirit's assistance. Regular practice of the Prayer of Examen is intended to increase awareness of God's presence and more clearly detect the action and movements of the Holy Spirit throughout our days.

### *Practicing Examen*

Examen prayer is traditionally done at the end of the day, where we can pray through our day and pay attention to how God was at work throughout. Psalm 139 is a beautiful model of Examen prayer in Scripture, illustrating the four movements of the practice:

**Presence** // "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" (Psalm 139:7)

- Remind yourself of God's presence and His desire to be with you
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you be attentive to God's presence
- "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." Psalm 145:18

**Gratitude** // "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:14)

- Think about the past 24 hours—what makes you thankful?
- Remember the small pleasures of your day—a good night's sleep, a conversation, a good laugh, a glimpse of the sunset, etc.
- Center your mind and spirit on these experiences and encounters and God's generosity made evident in them

**Review** // “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” (Psalm 139:23)

- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your mind as you retrace the steps of your day
- Look back objectively over the past 24 hours—observe and notice details—don’t interpret or rationalize
- Where did you love well? Where were you cooperating with God’s action?
- Where were you resisting God’s action?
- What habits or patterns do you notice?

**Response** // “See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:24)

- Pray silently or aloud, or journal, expressing your thoughts on all you’ve remembered in this exercise
- Do you need to take action right now? (seek forgiveness, offer thanks, etc.)
- What do you want to continue tomorrow?
- What do you want to do differently?

In Exodus 2:24-25, we are reminded that behind every human action in the story of the Exodus is this reality: God heard. God remembered. God looked. God knew.

And this is still true in your life today: God hears. God remembers. God looks. God knows. May this practice help us give our attention to God’s work in our lives in ways we often simply don’t notice.