

St. Ignatius
&
The Examen

Reflective Prayer
for Finding God
in All Things

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Christ Church Exeter

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)



*Statue of St. Ignatius at Boston
College in Chestnut Hill, MA*

- Born Inigo de Loyola, a Basque courtier and soldier
- In 1521, wounded during the battle of Pamplona & had a profound spiritual conversion
- Founded the Jesuits in 1540, “for the greater glory of God”
- From his personal experience and prayer, created a guide for finding God and self called the Spiritual Exercises
- Contemplatives in Action

The Examen

(yes, it's spelled this way!)

- Daily prayer done by Jesuits
- Practiced by millions of people worldwide
- Overall pattern: gratitude, desire for God's help and presence, review and assessment, asking forgiveness, & commitment to renewed growth
- Consolation - experience of God, presence of God
- Desolation - absence of God, struggle to find God
- Goal = awareness of God's presence and action, self-knowledge

“One day a monk asked the abbot if he ever encountered God. Had he ever had a vision or seen God face-to-face? After a long silence the abbot answered frankly: no, he hadn’t.

But, said the abbot, there wasn’t anything surprising in this because even to Moses in the Book of Exodus God said, “You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” God says that Moses will see his back as he passed by him. Thus, Father Kolvenbach wrote, “looking back over the length and breadth of his life the abbot could see for himself the passage of God.”

The examen helps you see God in retrospect. And what Fr. Kolvenbach said about the search for God could be applied to this daily prayer. “In this sense, it is less a matter of searching for God than of allowing oneself to be found by Him in all of life’s situations, where He does not cease to pass and where He allows Himself to be recognized once He has really passed.”

Finding God in your examen makes you more likely to look for God during the day. You become more aware of where God was and where God is. Gradually you realize that God is active every moment of the day. Finding God by looking behind you makes it easier to see God right in front of you.

*– From *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything*, by James Martin, S.J.*

Making it Our
Own:
The “Augustinian
Examen”



Merrimack College students on a SEND
trip to Pine Ridge Reservation, South
Dakota in March 2019

Augustinian Spirituality

*Gratitude
Humility
Compassion
Generosity
Love*

AN AUGUSTINIAN EXAMEN



*Let me know myself;
let me know You.*

– St. Augustine

Step One:

I give thanks.

*I give thanks for all of the graces,
benefits, and good things of the
past day.*

Step Two:

I ask for help.

I ask for the Holy Spirit for help to discern my day with openness.

Step Three:

I review the past
day.

AN
AUGUSTINIAN
EXAMEN



*Let me know myself;
let me know You.*

– St. Augustine

Step Four:

I respond.

*I respond to what I felt or learned
in my review just made.*

*Where did you find consolation
(the experience of God, presence
of God)*

*or desolation (absence of God, or
struggle to find God)?*

Step Five:

I resolve.

*I resolve with hope and the
grace of God to amend my life
tomorrow.*

Sharing our Experiences

At your table, discuss:

- What was the exercise like for you?
- What did you enjoy? What was challenging?
- Did anything come to mind that surprised you?

Acknowledging that prayer can be very personal and vulnerable, only share what feels comfortable to you in this setting.

Questions?
Comments?

Some Resources and References:

The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything by
Fr. James Martin, S.J.

The First Spiritual Exercises as Originally
Conceived by Ignatius Loyola and Adapted
by Michael Hansen, S.J. 2013 Ave Maria
Press

About the Merrimack Augustinian
Examen:

https://www.merrimack.edu/about/offices_services/campus_ministry/an-augustinian-examen/