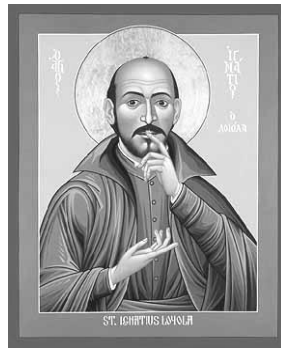


Examen of Consciousness



Saint Ignatius of Loyola lays out the five steps of the examen in #43 of his Spiritual Exercises. The Examen is at the heart of discernment as it brings into God's Light the ways in which our hearts are either congruent or incongruent with Christ's heart. This is precisely why it is the examination of *consciousness* rather than simply *conscience*. The focus is not on sin, but on the "discernment of spirits" that Ignatius deemed essential for authentic Christianity. It has five simple steps that can be used multiple times a day or once a day. It only takes a few minutes but produces tremendous fruit in our spiritual lives.

PRAYER FOR LIGHT: Begin by relaxing into God's presence. Ask God to *illumine* your heart so that you can know yourself as the Holy Spirit knows you.

THANKSGIVING: Spend a minute thanking God for very specific gifts you've received so far today, remembering poverty.

SURVEY OF ACTIONS: Look over the experiences of the day (since the last examen), focusing on the feelings that surfaced. Choose *one* experience that seems the most significant (either in a positive or negative way). Ask God these questions:

1. What are You teaching me thru this event?
2. God, in what ways did I *fail* to respond to you during the experience?
3. In what ways did I lovingly respond to during the experience?

CONTRITION: Ask for forgiveness for any failure to reverence the presence of God.

RESPONSE: What hope-filled desire do I offer to God based on what He has just revealed to me?