

## Examine of Gratitude

Adapted from Reimagining the Ignatian Examen

By Mark Thibodeaux

- This structured prayer time should be a light reflection of the day and should last no longer than 10 minutes. Journaling is not required or even necessarily recommended, but as always journalers need to journal so feel free to get what you need.
- **Consider beginning your contemplative time in a usual, familiar fashion.** Using the same rituals and movements (like prayer breaths, lighting a candle, bowing, etc) every time you call your soul to attention creates an easier runway for bringing yourself “present” *Adapted from (p. 6)*
- **Spend a few moments reflecting back on the things in your day you can find to be thankful for.** Thibodeaux offers: the good mood in which I woke up, a characteristic of God that is highlighted to me, a spiritual encouragement, a mercy, a kind word from a friend, my underserved good health, an easy commute to work, another day with my family. *Adapted from (p. 6)*
- **In order to cultivate gratitude in greater measure, first turn to a moment you were UNAWARE of a gratitude,** God’s presence, or to a time of need. What was my most unfree moment today? That is: at what moment was I being carried away by my own fears, resentments, cravings, addictions, anxieties, or despairing thoughts? In my imagination, I return to that specific moment in my day. I imagine God and myself, his arm around my shoulder, side by side, or me in the lap of his comfy throne, watching this moment together. I imagine that we can look at not only externals as though watching a video from a hidden camera, but also that we can look at the internal movements. God and I watch as my heart fills to the brim with the negative emotion that swept me away from awareness, presence, and gratitude. *Adapted from (p. 6)*
- **I speak to God about what I see. I ask God for forgiveness or maybe for healing.** I allow God to show me his Kind Father perspective of the situation. Is there anything that I sense God is trying to tell me about this? I talk with him about this, especially acknowledging my deepest emotions about it. *Adapted from (p. 6)*
- **Here is where we hone the gratitude:** I look back again and I ask, What moment am I most thankful for? What was my most spiritually FREE moment?. In what mental reflection of a scene from my day did I enjoy a moment, enjoy a blessing, or feel and act free from negativity, free from low and earthly thoughts and emotions? At what point did I feel most alive and aware of the gift in that moment? When did I feel most in sync with God, even if I didn’t notice it at the time? *Adapted from (p. 7).*
- As before, **I imagine God and myself watching this grace-filled moment.** We replay the moment here in my prayer time. We observe not only what happened, but also what was going on deep in my heart. We watch as my heart fills to the brim with the blessing of that moment. I speak to God about this. I allow God to show me his perspective. We talk about it for a while. We celebrate that moment. *Adapted from (p. 7)*

- **Now God and I look at tomorrow** How can I live my day tomorrow out of that freedom that I felt in today's grace-filled moment? What attitudes and behaviors will I adopt in order to avoid the pit of that unfree moment? What is God calling me to do to live in sight of the grace and gratitude and spiritual freedom? *Adapted from (p. 7)*
- **I make whatever commitments that need to be made** and I ask for God for help to keep that commitment. \* This will invite a "primed pump" for your following day or portion of day in which you will be more tuned into these two states of being that you reflected on from the previous time period\* *Adapted from (p. 7)*
- **Consider ending your reflection/contemplative time in the same way each time.** (Breath, stillness, worship, blowing out candle, bowing, etc.) *Adapted from (p. 7)*

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