

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
SESSION FOUR—IGNATIAN AND TERESAN SPIRITUALITY
INTIMATE DIALOG

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE—ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

The examination of conscience or “the examen” is a spiritual practice, which many have found extremely helpful, especially if practiced on a regular basis. St. Ignatius recommended it above all others, including praying the Divine Office, as a daily practice to his followers, the members of the Society of Jesus.

The process is simple. It can be done alone or with a small group of intimate friends. It can be done almost anywhere--daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly.

- 1) **Preparation. You might wish to light a candle. Sit comfortably. Breathe evenly and naturally. Breathe in God’s unconditional love, and when you breathe out, fill the space around you with it.**

- 2) **Ask God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are *most grateful*. When were you most able to give and receive love today? When did you feel most alive today?**
Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so special. Breathe, and receive life again from that moment.

- 3) **Now 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? When did you feel life draining out of you?**
Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Be with your feelings without trying to change or fix them in any way. Breathe, and let God’s love fill you just as you are.

- 4) **Give thanks to God for whatever you have experienced. If you are with friends, share as much as you wish with them.**

Adapted from *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, by Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Matthew Linn, SJ. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995)

(Source: Patricia Blakely for EDFP, Fall, 2004)

ANIMA CHRISTI—A Traditional Prayer

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me;
Within thy wounds hide me;
Suffer me not to be separated from thee;
From the malignant enemy defend me;
In the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to thee,
That with thy saints I may praise thee
Forever and ever. Amen.

Introductory prayer from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. From *Draw Me into Your Friendship*, by David L. Fleming, SJ, (St. Louis: MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996.)

ST. TERESA'S BOOKMARK

Nada te turbe,	Let nothing trouble you,
Nada te espante,	Let nothing scare you,
Toda se pasa,	All is fleeting,
Dios no se muda,	God alone is unchanging.
La Paciencia	Patience
Todo la alcanza;	Everything obtains.
Quien a Dios tiene	Who possesses God
Nada le falta.	Nothing wants.
Solo Dios basta.	God alone suffices.

From *Praying with Teresa of Avila*, Rosemary Broughton, (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1990.)

(Source: Patricia Blakely for EDFP, Fall, 2004)