*Prayer: Daily Examen by Ignatius of Loyola*

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God’s presence and discern his direction for us.  The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God’s hand at work in our whole experience.

The phrase, “If today you hear his voice,” implies that the divine voice must somehow be accessible in our daily experience, for we are creatures who live one day at a time. If God wants to communicate with us, it has to happen in the course of a 24-hour day, for we live in no other time. And how do we go about this kind of listening? Long tradition has provided a helpful tool, which we call the “examination of consciousness” today.

“Rummaging for God” is an expression that suggests going through a drawer full of stuff, feeling around, looking for something that you are sure must be in there somewhere. I think that image catches some of the feel of what is classically known in church language as the prayer of “Examen.”

* **Become aware of God’s presence*.***
* **Review the day with gratitude.**
* **Pay attention to your emotions.**
* **Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.**
* **Look toward tomorrow.**

1. **Become aware of God’s presence.**Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
2. **Review the day with gratitude.**Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day’s gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
3. **Pay attention to your emotions.**One of St. Ignatius’s great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.
4. **Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.**Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
5. **Look toward tomorrow.**Ask God to give you light for tomorrow’s challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what’s coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God’s guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.