

Betty's bulletin column this week 11/29/15---

Engaged Catholic Prayer

Put on the Life Savior

Below you'll find our new form of prayer on which to build up to 20 minutes of prayer as a household this month. It is a beautiful daily prayer, which I pray in my own life, and it has helped me grow in my relationship with Jesus for the past 13 years. I'm excited to share this prayer with you! It is **the Examen**--- which is NOT the same as the examination of conscience done before the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This particular prayer is such a gift! It is our prayer for the month of December. I am praying that you incorporate it, not just for a month, but for years to come. I will make you aware that God is acting in your day every day. All you need to do is become attuned to God's Presence, which is the way to grow in praying without ceasing. Blessings on you and your praying The Examen!

The Examen

The Examen – is **NOT** an examination of conscience. Whereas, an Examination of Conscience focuses on me and my sin, **the Examen is focused on God**

The Examen –is focused on God, not on me.

The goal of the Examen is awareness and sensitivity to the Presence of God in my everyday life.

Where was God in the past couple of hours? Where is God calling me?

4 Guidelines from St. Ignatius

- 1. If I want to experience the fruits of *The Examen*, I have to do it faithfully on a daily basis.**
- 2. Practice it twice/day. Once before lunch & once before bed. I need to do it at least once/day.**

3. **There are 5 Steps to the Examen. With time, you will make it your own with your own unique twist.**
4. **Spend just 15 minutes doing this.** This does not replace our hour of daily prayer. You pray by the time and not by the steps. Done after 15 minutes.

The 5 Steps of the Examen

Step 1: Begin with GRATITUDE. I look over my day and thank God for the many gifts, graces, or blessings I have received. In gratitude, I discover how rich my life really is. What am I grateful for over the last 12 hours? I express thanksgiving for the way God has entered my life in these 12 hours.

Step 2: Petition the Holy Spirit and ask Him to open my eyes, ears, heart as I review the events of the last few hours, since the last Examen. As I look over the last 12 hours, I ask God where he is speaking to me in my everyday life. *Where do I see your Presence, Lord, in the ordinary, humdrum routine of my day? Help me to see and hear how You were calling me to respond in a special way.*

Step 3: Review the past hours—since the last Examen---to look at and probe hour-by-hour and minute-by-minute, event-by-event. I ask: Where was God, Where was God speaking to me, challenging me, and trying to touch my heart this day? How is the Spirit inviting me to be more Christ-like? God is a God of surprise and disguise. As I go through the past 12 hours, I discover the many different ways God is speaking to me or trying to speak to me. *Open my awareness to Your Presence, O Lord.*

Step 4: Prayer of Forgiveness - This step is a DIALOGUE of forgiveness. I express my sorrow for not being aware of God's Presence. I express sorrow for living on autopilot, unaware and unconscious of God's surrounding presence in my daily routines. After I express my regret, I wait to hear the word of mercy, of forgiveness, and compassion from God.

Step 5: The Renewal - I now look at the upcoming 12 hours of my day. In this anticipation I need to be particularly attentive to how the Holy Spirit may manifest his presence or call. I anticipate God's presence in order to participate in it.

In this step, I look over my upcoming daily schedule as I know it to be and anticipate it to be. Where might the God of disguise surprise me? What situation might the Spirit use to mold me?

All is holy, all is sacred – there is no wall that separates the sacred from the secular.

As Gerard Manley Hopkins said, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God” . May I see that **All is holy, all is sacred – there is no wall that separates the sacred from the secular.**

In all things be a God seeker, and at all times be a God finder. Among all kinds of people and in all circumstances. Make it a life habit to copy Jesus Christ, to do what he did, avoid what he avoided.

God is in all things.

God's blessings on you as you become aware of Go's Presence in your day, in your life!