



IGNATIAN PRAYER

Ignatian prayer is imaginative, reflective and personal. Saint Ignatius Loyola encouraged people to develop an intimate relationship with a God who loves them and desires the best for them. Ignatius trusted human desires. He believed that our deepest desire is to return God's love.

Saint Ignatius also trusted feelings. He believed that feelings of joy and sorrow, peace and distress, were important indicators of the path towards fruitful decisions and deeper union with God. At the heart of Ignatian prayer are Ignatius' writings in his *Spiritual Exercises*, and the Daily Examen, the technique of prayerful reflection that Ignatius described there.

The Daily Examen that Saint Ignatius practised consisted of the following five steps:

1. Become aware of God's presence, or ask God to help you remember that he's there with you.
2. Review the day with gratitude (as best you can!).
3. Pay attention to how you're feeling about the day.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray about it.
5. Look towards tomorrow: what do you expect the day to hold? Ask God to help you remember that He is with you.

DO THE EXAMEN

At the end of the day, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your memory over the day's events and conversations. Give thanks for the blessings of the day. Ask God's forgiveness if you have wandered from Jesus' path of truth, compassion and kindness. Ask for God's help with any negative patterns that you see in your life, or for strength and wisdom to deal with upcoming events or issues. You can do this prayer once a day, twice a day, three times a day; the important thing is to develop a pattern that's best for you.



SAMPLE PRAYERS

There is a rich Ignatian prayer tradition. The Daily Examen above is the lynchpin, but there is a great range of prayers by Saint Ignatius and those inspired by him. A couple are included below.

Prayer for Professionals

I want what You want, O Lord. By asking You for guidance with complete confidence and faith that You are helping me, nothing that I am called upon to do becomes “too much” or “too bothersome”. Nor is there any room for worry.

I will find it easy to ask You each day to be a partner in my work; to help me get things done; to weigh my actions and decisions in the light of “Is this right?”, “Is this just?”, “Is this doing Your will?”

With Your help, I will make decisions better and faster, knowing that You will not lead me astray. I will have confidence that, by wanting what You want, I need not worry about the outcome. So, I will live my life, knowing that it is Your will that I accomplish.

Prayer for Choosing a State of Life

From all eternity, O Lord, you planned my very existence and my destiny. You wrapped me in your love in baptism and gave me the faith to lead me to an eternal life of happiness with you. You have showered me with your graces and you have been always ready with your mercy and forgiveness when I have fallen. Now I beg you for the light I so earnestly need that I may find the way of life in which lies the best fulfilment of your will. Whatever state this may be, give me the grace necessary to embrace it with love of your holy will, as devotedly as your Mother did your will. I offer myself to you now, trusting in your wisdom and love to direct me in working out my salvation and in helping others to know and come close to you, so that I may find my reward in union with you for ever and ever. Amen.