

Handout for follow session #4

Teaching from Tonight's Session

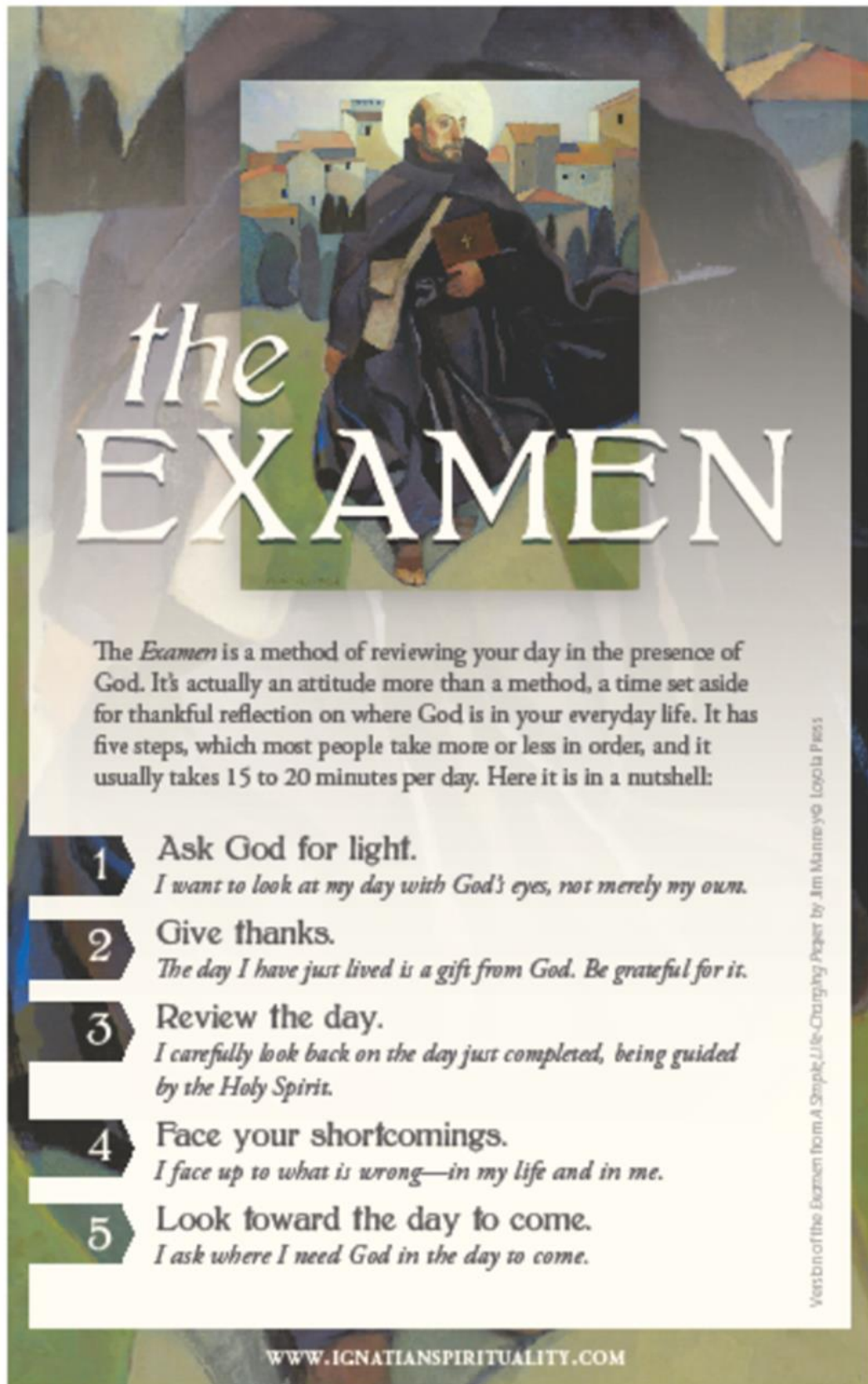
- In sessions one through three we looked at a way of praying to know Jesus better. This session looks at another essential part of our prayer life that must be incorporated if we wish to grow in holiness, that is seeing our lives in light of God's Teachings, so that God can open our eyes and allow us to see our sins and shortcomings. Then we surrender these to His healing power for purification. The traditional name for this type of prayer is the examination of conscience. Saint Ignatius of Loyola recommends both a general examen and a particular examen.
- Saint John of the cross refers to our purification through prayer as two parts an active part a passive part. We work together with God, there are things we must do to turn from sin and disordered affections, and then there are things that God does in us when we surrender these areas of our life to God. Spiritual growth is not psychology or self help, and it is not a work that we do it's a work that God does in us.
- Our spiritual growth can be likened to a log put into the fire. At first the log resists the fire, it's filled with moisture dirt, even maybe bugs. When the log first enters the fire, if the log could talk it would say "This hurts this is a bad idea!", but after some time, maybe after many times when the log snaps crackles and pops, the log and the fire become one. That is the goal of our prayer life that we become one with God transformed by his love, and we are purified by the fire. Our role is simply putting ourselves in the fire and having patience and faith to cooperate with the purification.
- Two prayers; the examen (next page), and standing at the foot of the cross, lifting up your wounds and sins and disordered, loves to Jesus, let Him take them to the grave, so that we may share or fully in his resurrection.

Homework assignment #4

The challenge is to expand your prayer time if you haven't already, or alternate days, but to include both the prayer with scripture that we've been doing and an examination of conscience (both general and particular). These can actually all be put into one prayer time, using the scripture to meditate upon, using the scripture to guide an examination of conscience and submitting our faults to God, and then finishing in contemplation lifting the heart to God being filled with the Holy Spirit. For each week day now the challenge would be to use the scripture passage that we will be having at the Sunday Mass during the coming weekend. Ideally participants would start to form small groups to continue this process on the road after the last Follow Session.

Ignatian Examen of Conscience

The Particular Examen is the same as the General Examen, just focusing on the one area you are focusing on to grow in.



the
EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1** Ask God for light.
I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.
- 2** Give thanks.
The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- 3** Review the day.
I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- 4** Face your shortcomings.
I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.
- 5** Look toward the day to come.
I ask where I need God in the day to come.

Version of the Examen from *A Simple Life-Crafting Prayer* by Jim Manry, © Loyola Press

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