

The Practice of Examen

Become aware of God's presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your awareness of God's promised presence.

Review the day with gratitude. Give thanks and celebrate the gifts that you received from God and others.

Pay attention to your emotions. List a few feelings that were present throughout the day (i.e. embarrassment, fear, elation, contentment).

Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring one element of your day to mind. Focus specifically on that experience. Sit with it prayerfully.

Looking back on the day's events, which have been most life-giving? Which have been the most life-draining?

What are the things that led you towards God today? What are the things that led you away from God?

When did you have the greatest sense of leaning into your true self (an identity that is firmly rooted in the love of Christ)?

When did you have a sense of leaning into your false self (ways in which we strive to find our identity apart from Christ)?

As you sit prayerfully and listen to the stirrings of the Spirit, what is God's invitation to you as you pay attention to the day's events?

Look toward tomorrow. As you look toward tomorrow, allow God to shape a prayer within you.

Consolation and Desolation

Here are some of the main symptoms of desolation and the most commonly experienced blessings of consolation.

Desolation

- turns us in on ourselves
- drives us down the spiral ever deeper into our own negative feelings
- cuts us off from community
- makes us want to give up on things that used to be important to us
- takes over our whole consciousness and crowds out our distant vision
- covers up all our landmarks
- drains us of energy

Consolation

- directs our focus outside and beyond ourselves
- lifts our hearts so that we can see the joys and sorrows of other people
- bonds us more closely to our human community
- generates new inspiration and ideas
- restores balance and refreshes our inner vision
- shows us where God is active in our lives and where he is leading us
- releases new energy in us

What to do...

In Desolation:

1. Tell God how you feel and ask for help.
2. Seek out companionship.
3. Don't go back on decisions you made in consolation.
4. Stand still and remember your inner map.
5. Recall a time of consolation, and go back to it imagination.
6. Look for someone who needs your help, and turn your attention toward them.
7. Go back to 1.

ASK:

1. What pulls me away from God?
2. What drains life from me?
3. What causes spiritual resistance?

In Consolation:

1. Tell God how you feel and thank him.
2. Store this moment in your memory to return to when things get tough.
3. Add this experience to your life map.
4. Use the energy you feel to further your deepest desires.
5. Let the surplus energy fuel the things you don't like doing, and do them.
6. Go back to 1.

ASK:

1. What draws me close to God?
2. What give me life?
3. What brings spiritual momentum?

Consolation: Deepening and Savoring

Remember	the experience of consolation
Notice/name	What physical sensations in the body do I have? What emotions am I feeling? What seems to "name" my experience of consolation? (checking it with the bodysense to see if it resonates)
Sit with it	letting it deepen, listening for it's story
Wondering	Asking the place of consolation -What is the "more" here? -What is most life giving about this? -Where might God be in all this?" -Might there be a symbol that would express how all this feels?"
Welcome	whatever comes, and savor it
Ask	what it needs in order to be here more often/more fully
Notice changes	in bodysense, in emotions
Gratitude	express thanks to God

Desolation: Holding with Compassion

Remember	the experience of desolation
Notice/name	What physical sensations in the body do I have? What emotions am I feeling? What seems to "name" my experience of desolation? (checking it with bodysense to see if it resonates)
Sit with it	holding it with compassion, listening for it's story
Wondering	Asking the place of desolation: -What might be under this? -What might need healing here? -How might God be inviting me to more freedom or life here? -Might there be a symbol that expresses how all this feels?
Welcome	whatever comes and hold gently
Ask	If it feels unfinished, ask this place "How do you need me to be with you until I can spend time with you again?"
Notice changes	in bodysense, in emotions
Gratitude	express thanks to God