



EXAMEN FOR THOSE IN QUARANTINE

The Examen is a traditional method of prayerful awareness that is a bedrock in Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit education. It's a short, easy way to reflect on your day and become more mindful about where you are experiencing grace or goodness and where there is room in your actions and life for growth. Especially in times of uncertainty and rapid change, taking time to reflect becomes essential.

What people don't often realize is that the Examen is exceptionally flexible and adaptive. It can be used to review your day or it can be adapted to hone in on a specific issue or focus. So in light of the new set of circumstances many of us find ourselves in with COVID-19, we thought it would be helpful to adapt the Examen to this unique situation.

Take a moment to settle. Take a deep breath. Get comfortable in your seat. Close your eyes. Like a rock settling on the bottom of a lake after it's thrown in, let yourself settle.

- 1. Acknowledge how you are feeling in this moment.** Are you restless and anxious? Don't feel like you need to silence that to pray. Acknowledge it. Are you feeling down or lethargic? It's ok if even doing this short prayer takes a lot of energy. God wants to be present in all parts of our lives—not just the easy or serene moments.
- 2. Ask for light and insight as you prepare to review your day.** For some that light may come in the form of a sense of the Divine. For others it's from a deep sense of your true self. Ask for the ability to pay attention to things you may have glanced over.
- 3. Take a moment to think about the experience of quarantine or shelter in place.** Especially think about where you are physically. Even as your mobility is limited and your home becomes a place you have to be, ask yourself what is one thing that you are grateful for about this place and this time? Perhaps it's the extra time spent with loved ones. Perhaps it's simply gratitude for having shelter. What or who makes you feel grateful to be exactly where you are at this moment? Allow yourself to sink into that feeling of gratitude before we move forward.

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4. Experiences of having our mobility restricted can often make us aware of it and what it means for our lives. Simply acknowledge them, pay attention, and listen to where God may be speaking.

5. All around the world, others are experiencing something similar to us right now.

Is there an invitation to experience solidarity with others who may have to shelter in place or cannot leave where they are located?

Restrictions to freedom of mobility is something that groups of people suffered from before COVID-19. Is this inviting you to be more aware of the experiences of homebound elderly, refugees, and individuals with disabilities?

6. Whether you are sheltering in place with others or alone, how have you experienced God in others? Has it been grace in small gestures, companionship, or learning something new from so much time spent together or in conversation? In what ways has it been hard to see God in others? When have you felt frustrated or wished you had more time to yourself? When have you felt lonely or isolated, even if you are physically with other people?

7. Note the emotions you feel when you think of these moments without judging yourself or overanalyzing. Simply acknowledge them, pay attention, and listen to where God may be speaking

8. As you think of the ways in which you experience this change in our freedom of mobility, pick a moment from this experience that seems important, significant, or is manifesting itself the strongest. Pause and reflect on where you're being invited to grow from that moment. If you are a person of faith, take a moment to pray with it.

9. God gifted us with limitless creativity and imagination. Even in this time of separation and restricted movement, what is one way you can experience movement—whether through physical activity, deepened awareness of self and others, or using technology to build connections?

Take a deep breath and moment of quiet. When you are ready, return to your day.

Written by Susan Haarman

