

THE PRACTICE OF THE AWARENESS EXAMEN

This instrument, tool, of spiritual life and growth should help you to become more aware of your interior experiences, and of how God is drawing you (John 6:44).

1. Prayer of Thanksgiving (in general): Begin by acknowledging your need to be grateful to God; for He is a loving, provident God, and you are a creature who is helpless and needy. Realize more deeply that all is gift from the hand of God (I Cor. 4:7). Try to deepen your attitude of gratitude by thanking God for all things in general e.g. for your existence, for a share in the Divine Life of the Trinity, for the air and sun, for friends, for your vocation, for the Eucharist, etc. -- Praise the Lord and give Him thanks!

2. Prayer for Light Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you about what has transpired today, because you are only too aware of your own blindness to see Him in the events and the persons of your day; and, too, you know your own ignorance in understanding the movements in your heart and in understanding God's ways in your life. So ask the Spirit to show you what He wants you to see and to understand.

3. Finding God in All Things:
 - (a) At this point try to become aware through a general analysis, or survey, of your day. Relax in the Lord's Presence and by looking back slowly over the events, persons, and circumstances of the day. Listen to the Lord and allow Him to show you where He was meeting, encountering, challenging, being present to you during that day. Just let the corks of persons and events pop up to the surface of your mind in order to recognize Christ in them and so permit you to understand them by bringing your faith-perspective to bear on them~ Look over, primarily, your attitudes in relation to Christ's attitudes, and consider your actions in the second place. Focus mainly on your affectivity. such things as joy, pain, turmoil, increased feeling of love, anger, harmony, anxiety, freedom, fears, the presence of God, etc. and ask WHY? Your feelings are the tip of the iceberg and by investigating below the surface, by asking a series of whys, you discover the attitudes and disorders which are un-Christ-like, and also those which are like Christ's attitudes. All feelings are acceptable, but not all actions. You have to notice the direction of your feelings; moving you toward God or toward self? You then become more aware of the opportunities offered you by the Lord that day, and you discover where you found Him and where you didn't recognize Him.

(b) In particular you should investigate any area of your life in which the Lord is calling you to a deeper conversion, to a change. Look at the area, too, of your greatest weakness.

4. Prayer for the Gifts of Sorrow and of Gratitude From your awareness (in number 3 above) of your failure to respond to the Lord, whether in events or persons, ask for His forgiveness and pardon. Your lack of love may have been demonstrated through some selfish attitude, action, or inaction. Lord have mercy.! You should also express your thanks to God for the things, events, persons, unselfish attitudes, which you discovered today during your reflection. You thank God for these things, in particular.
5. Prayer for Help and Guidance for Tomorrow. With trust in God ask for His bread for the needs of tomorrow. For e~mple, you might need to become more aware of what triggers your anger, and your need to receive the grace, at the time, to turn to the Lord for His immediate help. Maybe it is in some task, some ministry, toward some person, in some event that you need God's continuing aid...then pray for it specifically.

For variety you might, from time to time, use suitable Scripture passages for numbers 1, 2, 4 & 5 above.