



Heart-based Spiritual Practice

IGNATIAN EXAMEN

The *following The Way* Spiritual Types Indicator lists several suggested spiritual practices for each Heart-based spiritual types. One more contemplative practice they can enjoy is called Ignatian Examen. The Examen is a very simple, very effective form of prayer. It was originally taught by St. Ignatius of Loyola over 400 years ago. It helps us to reflect on the events and emotions of our day, look for evidence of God's presence and guidance, and prepare with hope for the day to come. It is perhaps best to use this prayer at the end of the day or in the morning, reflecting on the previous day. It is suggested you allow at least 20 minutes, spending a few minutes on each step. The more time you put into expressing and listening, the more space you allow to get to the heart of the matter. There are several slightly different ways to pray the Examen, but they all have five basic steps. Below is a version using the acronym H.E.A.R.T. This prayer can take as long as you need it to take.

- H** Here
Take a moment to breathe, become aware of God's presence and become present yourself.
- E** Express Gratitude
Regardless of the unique circumstances of that particular day, give God thanks for the beautiful blessing that is life.
- A** Actions
Think back on the events of the day. What happened? What emotions did you feel? Can you see where God was active, perhaps in a feeling, a conversation, a strange coincidence?
- R** Responses
How did you respond to these events? Was it in a way that felt Christ-like? Or is there a way you hope you might respond differently next time?
- T** Trust
What do you anticipate will happen tomorrow? What feelings does that bring up for you? Trust God to help guide and direct you, seeing life less as a lonely walk and more as a divine dance.