

The method of prayer promoted by St Ignatius of Loyola is based, essentially, on discernment. It's about discerning where the Holy Spirit is active in your life each day. Over time, this teaches you to discern where God is calling you: what Jesuits call 'God's dream for your life'. A very simple way of practising this is what's called the Examen, or the examination of conscience. You can do this in five or ten minutes at the end of the day. You find a moment of quiet to reflect on the day and review everything that's happened. You pay attention to the feelings that come up for you—maybe when you remember one particular interaction, you feel a pang of anger; or maybe a little surge of joy. Then you ask two questions:

**What moment today am I most grateful for?**

**What moment today am I least grateful for?**

You can ask these questions in different ways. You can ask:

**When did I feel most nourished today?**

**When did I feel life draining out of me?**

Or:

**What was the biggest moment of consolation today?**

**What was the biggest moment of desolation?**

The Examen is about identifying what makes your soul thrive, not just about what makes you feel happy. It's easy to let the days run over us and forget about all the individual moments, the changes in mood, the daily ups and downs. We all have moments where something seems to kick us into life—something hits its mark and there's an inner excitement, a sense that this is the right thing to be doing—and then we go to make a coffee or we go outside and get annoyed at someone walking too slowly on the way to the tube, and we forget all about it. Ignatian spirituality teaches us to spend time, each day, remembering these moments, reflecting on them. Because they tell us something about who we're meant to be and what we're meant to do: God's dream for our lives.

<https://roselyddon.substack.com/p/attention-is-the-beginning-of-devotion?showWelcome=true>

**And I share below the following comment from Archdeacon Cathy Laskey who uses the examen in her personal prayer life:**

One thing I have found helpful is a response to the examen. Taking 10 mins and praying by asking the Holy Spirit to help me understand the meaning (discern) of what I have noticed... and to accept the gift of this understanding more fully into my life. This often provides direction living into the next day.