

The Examen

(Adapted from St. Ignatius of Loyola)

[“Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life” by Dennis Linn, Sheila Linn and Matthew Linn]

The **Examen** is a great way to learn your “Soul Language”. In fact, the primary purpose of the **Examen** is to help you learn your Soul Language.

The Holy Spirit *wants* to teach you your special Soul Language!

1. First, go to a quiet place. Sit quietly.
2. Ask, “Has someone hurt me?” If so, pray to God, “As you command, I fully forgive ____ from my heart.” If you are unable to forgive, ask for God’s help. “Lord, I am a sinner. Help me obey Your command to forgive everyone from the heart.” Forgiveness opens our spiritual ears, eyes, and heart.
3. Next, pray: “God, I give You all my doubts, anxieties, upsets and anger.”
4. As a way to do this symbolically, take a deep breath and slowly exhale. As you exhale, imagine yourself giving it all to God.
5. Repeat several times – giving God all of your fears, negativity, doubts, etc.
6. Next pray: “Holy Spirit, pour Your peace into my mind, heart and soul.”
7. As you slowly inhale, imagine *breathing in* the soothing, peaceful, living breath of the Holy Spirit. Do this several times.
8. Now, centered in the Holy Spirit’s peace...

Ask yourself these two questions:

1. “When, today, did I experience the *greatest sense of belonging* to God, to myself, or to others?” (In Jesus’ name, ask the Holy Spirit to show you.)
2. “When did I experience, the *least sense of belonging* to God, to myself, or to others?” (Again, in Jesus’ name, ask the Holy Spirit to show you.)

Another way of asking these questions:

1. “When did I feel the *most alive* today?”
2. “When did I feel *life draining out of me*?”

God speaks to us during both consolation AND desolation.

St. Ignatius taught that God speaks to us in the positive and in negative moments of our lives. He called positive moments “consolation”, and negative ones “desolation”.

What is the Lord teaching you in your consolation and desolation today?

Pray: “In Jesus’ name, Holy Spirit grant me Your gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment. Please reveal the lesson You are teaching me today.”

Then **wait, trust** and **be patient**. God will speak to you in your Soul Language – the language you are learning to hear.

With this process, you can learn how to pray with your whole heart, mind and soul. With new eyes, ears and heart, you will see and know God’s life acting within you; and then day-by-day, you will become the best version of yourself!