

The Examen
A Prayer for Beginning a New Year

***“The most important thing I do at the beginning of a new year is leave the old year where it fell.
It’s good to learn from the year you just lived, but if you stare at it too long, regret over the
opportunities you missed or mistakes you made will blossom.”***

Jon Acuff

As we begin a new year, praying the Examen can be a meaningful spiritual exercise. The Examen is a type of prayer developed by Ignatius of Loyola, a 16th century priest who founded the Jesuit order. Examen means “examination” and it is a form of prayer that invites you to reflect on a period of time and to be aware of how you experienced God or felt distant from God. The idea is to help us let go of all that stands between us and God. Usually, the Examen is a daily prayer, focusing on just one day at a time, but this prayer can also be a way of spiritual marking the transition from one year to the next.

To pray the Examen, set aside some time and space to prayerfully respond to the following prompts.

1. **Give thanks.** Name some of the blessings of 2018.
2. **Remember.** What were some struggles/hardships of 2018?
3. **Celebrate.** Where was God active? Where did I experience God?
4. **Confess.** Where did I fail to reflect God’s love?
 - a. Ask for forgiveness.
 - b. Do I need to seek amends?
 - c. Do I need to do anything else in order to let go?
5. **Anticipate.** What expectations/hopes do I have for 2019?
6. **Release.** What anxieties/uncertainties do I have for 2019?
7. **Entrust.** Place the year to come – and all it will contain – in God’s hands.

Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

**Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**