

## Our Lenten Journey



The season of Lent this year onbegins March 1, Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time to “Create Ourselves Anew”. It is a season for praying, fasting, and almsgiving to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's Resurrection at Easter and for our own Redemption. Often, we are asked, why do we need a special time of year to concentrate on these things . . . shouldn't we always be creating ourselves anew? Of course, we

should always work towards being the best person we are called to be. The Church recognizes, however, that we are all human. We do need special times to remind us what it means to be a person of faith, a follower of Jesus.

Lent is one of these special times. We often focus on fasting and almsgiving during Lent and sometimes forget about praying. There are many tools that the Church has given us to help us pray, including form prayers like the [Our Father](#), the [Hail Mary](#), the [Glory Be](#), and other practices like [Lectio divina](#), [Visio divina](#), and [Ignatian Contemplation](#). Another form of prayer that is, perhaps, lesser known is [the Examen](#), which was originally developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. This form of prayer, although it was originally prayed primarily by the followers of Ignatius, known as Jesuits ( Pope Francis is a Jesuit), it is certainly accessible to all of us. The [prayer card](#) to the right sums up the practice very nicely. [The Examen](#) is a contemplative form of prayer that allows us to take time out of our busy day to spend with God. The Examen is a prayer that helps us to seek the presence and the movement of God in the events of life as it is lived. The first time we do it, we may find that it goes kind of fast, maybe only 5 minutes. As we continue praying this way, however, we will find that the time passes quickly and we may end up spending 15 to 20 minutes or even half an hour. It is a wonderful way for us to look at our lives through the loving eyes of our God. During Lent, we are encouraged to pray, to fast, and to give of ourselves. This year, let's make sure that we remember to spend some quality time with God in prayer, maybe using the [Ignatian Examen](#).

God bless,  
Ed Jean  
Secondary Religious Education Consultant

The cover features a central illustration of a man in a blue robe, likely St. Ignatius, holding a book. The title 'the EXAMEN' is written in a stylized font. Below the illustration, there is a paragraph of text and a numbered list of five steps. The background is a soft, painterly landscape.

*the*  
**EXAMEN**

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1** Ask God for light.  
*I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.*
- 2** Give thanks.  
*The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.*
- 3** Review the day.  
*I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.*
- 4** Face your shortcomings.  
*I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.*
- 5** Look toward the day to come.  
*I ask where I need God in the day to come.*

Version of the Examen from *A Simple Life: Changing Prayer* by Jim Marney © Loyola Press

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