

Introducing the Consciousness Exam

The "*Consciousness Exam*" was a central part of discernment in the Exercises of St. Ignatius. It helps us gradually learn to attend to the movements of God's loving action in our everyday experience and to notice our response to that action.

Richard Foster explains this ancient practice by saying that we prayerfully reflect on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of our day to see how God has been at work in our lives and how we respond.

Perhaps the sunlight glistening through raindrops on a rose fills me with grateful reassurance of God's loving presence. Perhaps my tendency to blame others for my troubles is my resistance to God's invitation to face my own intolerance and find healing.

The practice is both simple and profound. As we come to the Exam we recall that we are in the presence of God who is holding us in love. We ask the Spirit for help to become aware. We review our day, both the good and the difficult. We give thanks for what has been given and simply ask forgiveness for the ways we have resisted God's action. And finally we open our hearts to become increasingly responsive to the Spirit's gracious movement in our lives.

Prepared by SoulStream
www.soulstream.org



Praying the Consciousness Exam

1. Recollection and Thanksgiving

- ▶ For what things, today, am I most grateful?
- ▶ Where did I experience life, peace, honesty, courage, etc?

2. Attentiveness to God's Action

- ▶ In what ways did You invite me to experience Your love and to see You at work in my life today?

3. Honesty about My Choices

- ▶ Where did I notice my choices to receive and respond to You?
- ▶ What signs of avoidance or resistance to Your invitation do I sense?
- ▶ What choices or habits have been keeping me from living in the freedom of Your love?

4. Trust in God's Loving Initiative

- ▶ Gracious Spirit, I open my heart to You. Teach me to trust You to lead me into greater freedom and love as You live in me tomorrow.

Don't make up answers. Let them emerge, even if only one thing seems significant.