

A.M.D.G.

Gratitude Examen / Gratitude Reflection of Consciousness

by Elisabeth Clarke

There is only love, there is only love, there is only love

It might seem unusual to begin the New Year with an Examen of gratitude. For St Ignatius gratitude was among the highest virtues. Gratitude enables us to recognise all that is good in our lives. Gratitude enables us to recognise our gifts. Hence, it is the starting point of using these gifts (these talents) to the fullest of our potential. Ingratitude, in turn, keeps us from living our life to the fullest. Counting your blessings is a great and effective way to give thanks for all that is good in your life. And know that any time is a good time to give thanks! Especially when circumstances are challenging I highly recommend you count your blessings, as it will shine a light on all that is good in your life. So, when you are feeling down, being unusually self-critical or having had a challenging week take ten minutes to do this Examen of Gratitude.

Now allow yourself to become still, in mind and in movement. Turn down the volume on random thoughts and preoccupations. Allow yourself to just BE. Become aware of your breathing. Feel your in-breath. Feel your out-breath. Let your breath flow. Now open your mind and your heart to this Examen asking God to reveal, in any special way, ALL the blessings of your life – the real big ones and the small ones, too.

Begin with silently asking,

“What am I most thankful for this week?”

“What has filled me with joy and gratitude?”

Usually a person/place/event/thing will pop up immediately

Name this gift before God: “God, I am so grateful for your gift to me of ...”

And repeat this a few times allowing the gratitude to sink in.

Relish this gift for a while. Whatever person/place/event/thing has popped up for you, place his/her face, place it before your mind’s eye. Observe it carefully and sit filled with love. Whatever gift is your focus, stay with prayerful imagination, allowing the good feelings to dwell up within. **All the while say thank you, thank you, thank you, God.**

Now more lightly watch as, one by one, in chaotic and random order, the big and small gifts of my life float before my mind’s eye: my health – “Thank you, God”; my relatives (even the difficult ones) – “thank you, God”; the good home-cooked meal - “Thank you, God”; and so on ...

When you haven given thanks for all there is and has been, see if there is anything else you want to say to God ...

To close this Examen practice we

a) Pray the Our Father OR

b) Place our hands in prayer on our forehead and then our heart. “Amen”.