

A.M.D.G.

Courage to Trust SCRIPT

"Hope and fear cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Invite one to stay." – Maya Angelou

Fear inhabits many lives and spaces during a pandemic. Like the many restrictions of late, fear too limits us. Living with fear resembles living in a box. Our journeys in life become short. Life feels small and claustrophobic. The longer we linger in fear, the smaller we become. "Only when we break free from fear can we see how big and full of possibilities life actually is"¹, Brendan McManus SJ writes. Jesus and many spiritual teachers of the past knew that. "Do not be afraid" is mentioned sixty-seven times in the Bible.

Instead of fearing Jesus asks us to trust, which in turn requires courage. Courage is the saviour that marches along side us when fear shows up. **Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to trust.** It inspires bursts of boldness that help us to speak our minds, follow our hearts and bare our soul to others. It helps to face and embrace our fears, to talk to trusted friends about them.

We cannot simply loose all our fears. However, as Christians we believe that there is always a bigger picture, a bigger story. We believe that "God is working with us, in us and through us."² Sometimes we find it while reading, sometimes in people who are not afraid themselves. Yet, we experience that trusting, building courage and seeing the bigger picture mostly when we centre ourselves and find stillness.

So, 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 thankful for this week?"

Spend a moment in gratitude, thanking God for these blessings, big and small.

Now spend some time asking God for the courage to trust in order to openly face your fears and look at some of the darker parts of your personality.

"God please lead me in a firm, but unconditionally loving way while reflecting today."

Looking over your past week, ask, "What fears were predominant in my heart?"

Dig deep, wait and see what you are really afraid of. It may not what you expect, because fears are often hidden beneath our level of consciousness.

Once this or other fears appear, name them and then move on.

Now place your discovered fears before God and ask, "Which of these most strongly affects my life right now?"

Zoom in on that fear and ask for further insights.

Next ask for healing for the times when fear got the better of you.
For example, “I ask for forgiveness when I lacked the courage to do much.”

Finally, ask, “What would it look like if I acted out of freedom from this fear?”
“How would today be different if this fear would not rule me?”
“How would my emotions, thoughts and words be different?”

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”.

This Examen practice was inspired by Jim Deed’s and Brendan McManus SJ reflection on ‘Fear’ in *Finding God in the Mess: Meditations for Mindful Living*, and the Examen *Fears, Attachments, Control and Entitlement* by the App ‘Reimagining the Examen’ (<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/reimagining-examen-app/>)

¹ Jim Deeds and Brendan McManus SJ, *Finding God in the Mess: Meditations for*
² *ibid.* p. 83