

# Spiritual Formation DISCERNMENT/AWARENESS EXAMEN

*This is a simple prayer exercise, a sort of spiritual inventory of our day, which can help us become more mindful and attentive to God's action in our lives as well as to our response to the overtures of God's loving initiatives for us. It takes only five to ten minutes, preferably in the evening, and goes like this:*

1. Still yourself and relax in the presence of God; be aware of His loving presence in and all around you.
2. Thank Him for everything He has done in our life since yesterday's examen.
3. Appropriate "the mind and heart of Christ." Ask God to illumine the eyes of your heart to enable you to see reality as Jesus sees it.
4. Reflect prayerfully and peacefully over your day; go through the day with our Lord. Engage fully all your senses as you recount what has transpired over the course of the day. *What do I see, smell, touch, or taste around me?*

Ask yourself:

*What has energized me and what has drained me?*

*How have I tuned in to His love and how have I disengaged from experiencing it?*

*What dominant feelings have emerged from within me as I carefully reviewed my day?*

As we prayerfully reflect over our day in this way, God sensitizes us to the ways in which He touches us and is present to us all day long. In other words, He enables us to *discern* or diagnose His touch from all the other movements and urges in our lives.

The focus of our attention is on God and His presence, not just on us. That's where the discernment comes in; we become more aware of His presence in the everyday.

5. Renew in love your sorrow for disappointing or offending our Father. Claim God's cleansing and forgiveness.
6. Accept an invitation from our Lord to spend time alone with Him in prayer tomorrow. Make it a date with a definite place and time. Look forward to the prospect of seeing God more clearly, of loving Him more dearly, and of following Him more nearly.
7. End by praying "The Lord's Prayer" (*Our Father*) slowly.