

Tuesday Fifth Week of Easter
12 May 2020
Gospel: John 14: 27-31a
Father Deutsch

The common approach to praying the Jesuit Examen is to allow one's recollection to drift back over the previous hours being alert for key moments, both positive of God's love and also negative of one's resistance and selfishness. This manner of praying the Examen can heighten one's daily alertness in seeking for God's action and invitation.

There is, also, a related approach to praying the Examen – one that brings a specific question to the recollection of the previous hours. Myself, I often am stressed and anxious. In my experience of these anxious moments, I have found three resources that help me to stay more balanced spiritually.

- A year ago, while praying during Good Friday, I was introduced to a playlist of songs that fit the spiritual tone of that day. I was amazed at how beneficial the music was to my prayer: and since then, I have benefitted from playlists that are available through the music service.
- Last Advent, I was positively stunned by a piece of art that came across my prayer life. Since then, I have had an art print near my chair so that I may gaze on it as I am praying during the day.
- Finally, in this time of the coronavirus, daily I go outside for fresh air and broadened horizons.

When I am panicky, I do not listen well. This applies also to listening for God. When frantic and worried, any divine messages that God may be sending must bounce off as they are not finding their way inside of my internal fort.

So, when I pray this Examen, I bring the query of whether I have made choices that day to access music, art and fresh air; and thus, have been more receptive to God's tender touch and to His whisper in my heart.

This version of the Examen does not explicitly fit into the common confessional examination of venial and mortal sins; and yet, there is truth that when I am deaf to God's still voice, then I am vulnerable to sinful desires and temptations that offer to soothe my anxiety. More deeply than the possible sinful actions is the lack of trust and confidence that God is watching out for me.

In today's passage from the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." When I have anxiety attacks, these assurances bounce off and I do not receive the encouragement and replenishment intended. So important for me, when stressed, is to be aided by music, art, and the outdoors.

Amen.