

Examen in the time of the coronavirus

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience.

Examen in the time of coronavirus:

- I need to spend extra time centring myself and allowing God's abiding love for me to come to consciousness through the fog of anxieties and fears. I could focus on a lighted candle or an ikon, or visualise God's love like a warm light flowing through me and surrounding me. God will never fail or forsake me.
- I can look back on the day and notice where God reached out to me and how: a stranger's smile, a phone call, a sign of hope. I reflect on how my mood changed as the day went on. Moods have their ups and downs but God's love is always there and holds us through the changes in our internal 'weather'. If the inner movements were positive, I can thank God. If they were negative, e.g. if I allowed anxiety to take over my thoughts, that's OK. I can show God what happened and ask for strength to recentre myself in awareness and trust in his faithful love.
- I can look back on the day and notice how I reached out to other people and to God. Where was I able to give in some way? Where was I blocked or hindered from reaching out? What caused it? I can recentre myself in God's love and ask him to show me what I need to be shown. How can God help me to give and receive love? It might have to be through a screen or over the phone, but it's still love.
- I can look forward: what are my hopes and fears for tomorrow? I can lay them trustfully in God's hands and compose myself to rest with something that takes my mind off my worries before bedtime: soothing music, a not too taxing book or TV programme. I am safe in God's hands through the hours of darkness. Before I sleep, I pray for those I love and for those in special need at this time.

'Within your hands we rest secure
in quiet sleep our strength renew;
yet give your people hearts that wake
in love to you, unsleeping Lord.'
(Compline hymn, Malling Abbey version)

With thanks to Ruth Tuschling, Diocesan Spirituality Adviser, for drafting.