

# Steps of an Annual Examen: Prayerfully Reviewing the Past Year

1. Ask God to show you your year as God saw it.
  - Ask God to open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to see what God saw.
2. Thanksgiving.
  - Reflect back over the past year in thanksgiving. What are you thankful for? Ask God to show you the gifts of the year. Think about the people you shared life with, the people you encountered, your old friends, new friends, your family, your work colleagues.
  - What memories of the past year are you thankful for? The simple moments? The extra special ones? Memories at home, at work, with friends and loved ones? In nature?
  - As God brings the memories to mind, offer your prayers of thanks for the gifts of your life.
3. Presence.
  - Again, look back over your year with God's help. Ask God to show you where you felt God's presence. Where did you experience an increase of faith, of hope, and of love this year? Where did you experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit named in [Galatians 5:22-23](#) at work in your life (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)?
  - What were you doing, what was happening, and who were you with when you experienced them?
  - Where did you have moments of insight and revelation from God about yourself? About God? About your relationships? About your call? About others? About the world?
  - Were there moments you were invited to feel as God might have felt? Moments of difficult consolation such as feeling sorrow or even holy anger at suffering or injustices you saw?
  - What key moments do you feel God inviting you to remember about the year?

#### 4. Lack of God's Presence.

- Look back over your year again with God's help. Ask God to show you where you struggled to name God's presence. Where did you feel a decrease of faith, of hope, of love? Where did you experience the opposite of the fruits of the Spirit as named in [Galatians 5: 19-21](#) (immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy)?
- What were you doing, what was happening, and who were you with when experienced this?
- Where were moments you inhibited your own growth in God due to a sinful act? Were there moments where relationships were hurt? Or actions done that hurt you? Or that hurt someone else?
- Were there any moments where suffering, loss or sorrow became overwhelming? Or you felt a sense of hopelessness, discouragement or helplessness?
- Where might you have experienced confusion or lack of clarity? Anxiety? Fear?
- Whatever God stirs to your mind, talk to God about it. Ask for forgiveness, for healing, for understanding, and for light. What are you being offered in the memories the Holy Spirit stirs to mind?

#### 5. Looking ahead to the coming year.

- Gather all that God revealed to you about what you are thankful for, where you felt God's presence, and where you struggled to name God's presence.
- Share your hopes and desires for the year ahead. Invite God to reveal to you God's hopes and dreams for you.
- Are there any actions you are being invited to take?
- Ask for the graces you seek this year.

Close with an Our Father.