

Examen 20

A Discernment

1. I begin in my usual way.
2. I spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big and small, that I've received today.
3. I ask God to reveal some decision I need to make. It could be a small decision I'll be making shortly—for example, how to handle a tricky situation; whether to say yes or no to an invitation; or what to say to someone asking my advice. Or it could be a big decision that is more long-term: a career choice; initiating a significant change in a relationship; making an important commitment. I ask God to lay out the options before me.
4. I ask God to show me how the factors related to this decision have affected my life in the recent past. I ask God to show me if leaning toward one or another direction has led to greater faith, hope, and love in my life. Has one direction led me closer to God? Has one direction seemed to lead me to a peace that could come only from God?
5. I ask God to reveal how this decision might affect the people involved. Will it help them or hurt them? If it will hurt them, is there some higher good that will come from it that would make it worth the hurt?
6. I ask God to show me my own emotions regarding this decision, particularly any emotions I've not yet acknowledged. For each strong emotion, I ask God to reveal the source of the emotion. Is it coming from a good spirit or a bad spirit within me? In other words, is this emotion coming from the part of me that is in sync with God or from the part of me that is running from or opposing God?
7. I surrender this whole matter to God, saying, "Thy will be done, O Lord." I ask God to give me a sense of peace about the whole thing, right now. I ask him to take me to the place in my heart that is beyond my emotions so that I may see the situation from a more objective point of view.
8. If I feel called to make a decision right now, I place that decision before God and ask him to make good of it, even if it is a mistake. If I am called to continue discerning for a while longer, I ask God for the patience to sit and wait for his call. If it is a big decision, I take note of the direction in which God seems to be leading me at this moment and I note whether or not this seems to be the way God has been nudging me for a while now.
9. I close this Examen in my usual way, or perhaps by quietly whispering, over and over again: "Thy will be done, Lord . . . Thy will be done, Lord . . . Thy will be done, Lord."