

The Atenean and the DAILY EXAMEN

At the end of every school day, the students of the Ateneo Junior High School are invited to slow down and do the *Consciousness Examen*, a practice endorsed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. This prayer invites the person to look back on the day, pay attention to how God has been present through his or her many experiences, and to get in touch with one's one response or lack of response to His invitation.

The tradition of praying the Examen develops in the young person a greater self-understanding and more importantly, a growing awareness of how God is actively involved in their lives. The Ignatian ideals of "finding God in all things" and "discernment" are only possible if one becomes attuned to God's presence in the ordinary and the everyday.

There are at least three benefits of instilling the discipline of the daily Examen among Ateneans:

1. **Sharpened spiritual sense-** By asking for the grace to see as Jesus sees, one learns to recognize patterns in how the Lord continues to care for him/her. Over time, the person grows in intimacy with the Lord and becomes more familiar with His ways.
2. **Growth in self-awareness-** Those who pray the Examen become adept at identifying internal movements through naming their consolations and desolations. Self-honesty leads to a greater freedom to respond to the Lord.
3. **A flexible method of prayer-** The Examen is a prayer for everyone. The habit of quieting down to look back and re-connect with the Lord is not limited to fixed times of the day. Hopefully, one acquires the skill of recognizing the movements of the Spirit not only during the time set aside for quiet reflection, but even as these events are unfolding. Thus, discernment moves away from being a method of decision-making but an actual way of life.

The basic components of the prayer are:

- **Becoming aware of God's presence**
- **Being grateful**
- **Reviewing the events of the day**
- **Saying sorry for one's mistakes**
- **Praying with hope for tomorrow**

The Campus Ministry Office provides multiple thematic Examen guides and continues to explore alternative and creative ways of promoting this prayer. The following are the sample scripts that have been developed for use during Academic Year 2019-2020. These are read aloud by the teacher during the last five minutes of the last period of the day.

Future plans include exploring audio visual prayer aides and soliciting Examen guides prepared by the students themselves.

EXAMEN 1: ENCOUNTERS

Sign of the Cross.

1. Place yourself in a comfortable sitting position.

Close your eyes.

Clear your mind of what you have been thinking or doing.

Take deep breaths. Slowly. Quietly.

(Repeat around three times:)

Inhale God's presence. [Let his goodness and love fill you up with positive energy.]

Exhale all the stress and burdens of the day. [Breathe them out of your system.]

2. Among the many people that you encountered today; name one person who made you feel good to be alive. Perhaps it was someone who made you smile. Or laugh. Or someone who said something unexpectedly nice to you today. Think of him or her and in your mind, say Thank You.

(pause)

We pray in gratitude for this encounter. "Dear God, I thank you for this person today."

3. You encountered many people today. Did you fail to be nice or kind to someone?

Did you make anyone feel uncomfortable or hurt someone with your words?

Sometimes choosing not to say anything can also be harmful.

Did you fail to give praise or encouragement when it was needed?

Did you choose to keep quiet instead of telling the truth?

How do you feel about this? What could the Lord be asking you to do about it?

(pause)

4. At the end of this long day, we pause to look forward to what is yet to come.

Tomorrow is another day full of fresh encounters with other people at home and in school.

What are you excited about?

What are you worried about?

Tell the Lord about it. He is always ready to listen.

(pause)

We end this Examen by praying together the prayer Jesus taught us.

Our Father.....

EXAMEN 2: ATTENTION

Sign of the Cross

Read slowly. You may repeat each item.

1. I ask God to make his presence known to me at this moment.

I beg Him for the grace of attention.

I want to be able to sit still and keep my focus on the Lord.

(pause)

My dearest Lord, this time is for you.

2. I spend this time in gratitude.

Every day, there are many things to be thankful for.

I choose from among them two things, persons, places or events.

(pause)

My dearest Lord, thank you for these blessings.

3. I look back and identify the events of the day.

I pick out from among them the time when I was most attentive:

When I listened intently to another- putting their needs ahead of my own

When I stayed focused on my task- giving it my best effort

When I was conscious of God's presence- aware of how He continues to care for me

(pause)

My dearest Lord, you are always at my side, keeping close watch over me.

4. I also take note of the times when I lost my focus:

When I pretended to pay attention even though my mind was elsewhere

When I made shortcuts and gave less than the effort I promised to give

When I heard my conscience tell me the right thing to do, but chose to ignore it

(pause)

My dearest Lord teach me to listen.

5. I set my sights on the promise of a new day.

Is there something or someone that needs my closer attention tomorrow?

Ask for guidance from the Lord.

(pause)

My dearest Lord, I look forward to spending another day with you.

Stay with me, Lord.

We end this Examen by praying together the prayer Jesus taught us.

Our Father....

EXAMEN 3: BEAUTY

Sign of the Cross.

1. We begin our Examen by staying still, keeping silent, and remembering that we are always in God's holy presence.
(pause)

Lord, we ask for the grace to be able to look back on our day
with fresh eyes- to see it as you want us to see it.

2. There is so much beauty in this world, if we just make the effort to look around us.
What beauty, natural or man-made, did you come across today?
Take time to appreciate the details- example: its color, shape, line, pattern....
Take time out to thank God for creating such wonderful things, big and small.
(pause)

3. Beauty is not only seen in material things.
It can also be found in experiences.
Of the many things that happened today, what can you consider to be a beautiful experience?
It need not be a new occurrence.
Beauty can be found even in the most ordinary, repetitive, and familiar events- the sunrise, a car ride to school, break time with friends, a conversation with the teacher, an engaging lesson...
What beauty has touched you today?
How does this make the world a happier, more livable place for you?
(pause)

4. We are used to finding beauty in symmetry and order:
straight lines, perfect timing, balanced composition.
We are naturally disturbed when things are not harmonious
and do not create a pleasing first impression.

Where was beauty harder to appreciate today?
What things, events and situations made it hard for me to be thankful?
Could I find something good and beautiful in them, despite all these?

(pause)

5. I pray in thanksgiving for this examen.
Lord, help me to open my eyes to the beauty that surrounds me.
Grant me the grace to see your hand behind these gifts.

EXAMEN 4: HABITS

(adapted from *Reimagining the Examen*)

1. I ask God to make His presence known to me at this moment.

I linger in God's presence and then make the sign of the cross.

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.

(pause)

3. Looking over my day, I ask God to show me a few of my habits.

I try to see my one thought or action today that is typical of the way I think or act.

Some habits, we know to be healthy. Some, we acknowledge to be unhealthy.

For example, have I developed a bit of

- Saying a short prayer before I begin something?
- Criticizing and nitpicking my classmates and friends?
- Cleaning up and putting things back in order after I use a place?
- Telling small lies to make myself look good in front of others?
- Greeting and smiling at people I meet in the corridor?
- Wasting time on the internet before doing my homework?

4. Good habits can help us do the right thing every time the same situation arises.

We do not have to think or make a decision.

On the other hand, bad habits can be harmful

because we do things automatically outside of our good judgment.

When I spot an unhealthy habit, I can ask God for forgiveness or healing.

Perhaps I can ask for guidance regarding how I can break the habit.

(pause)

5. Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is therefore not an act, but a habit."

Good habits are formed by constant practice.

What good habit have you already acquired?

Give thanks to God for this.

What good habit do you still want to develop?

Tell God about it.

(pause)

Together we pray.... Glory be to the Father....

EXAMEN 5: CREATION

(adapted from ecoexamen.org)

1. I begin by placing myself in a position that allows me to be more open to the Spirit at work in me.

Spirit of God open my mind and my heart to the ways you are speaking with me. Help me to look beyond my own thoughts and actions. I long to see and hear with God's eyes and ears.

2. I give thanks to God for all creation, remembering that God made us all to be good.

Which of God's creatures for me are wonderfully made?

In my mind, I scan the breadth of creation, both living and non-living
from my immediate surroundings to the ones beyond my reach...
the elements of nature: plants, animals, bodies of water, land
formations, heavenly
bodies, and the very air I breathe

I thank the Lord for all of His creations.

3. I ask for the grace to see closely how my personal actions affect the rest of the natural world.

How have my every day choices manifested a genuine concern for the environment?

OR do I subscribe instead to a throwaway culture-

By ignoring the consequences of the kind of trash I generate?

By buying things I don't really need or stuff that won't really last?

By neglecting to conserve limited resources- like electricity and water?

By refusing to think about how my choices affect the poor and marginalized?

4. I pray for a conversion of heart.

That I may desire to make a heartfelt commitment to reconciling with nature.

That I may realize more and more the consequences of my actions-

on my own future, on the next generation, on the rest of creation, on the weakest members of society.

That I may find the courage to speak up for the environment and make the necessary sacrifices to save our common home from further destruction.

5. I offer a closing prayer for the environment, expressing my hopes and dreams for the whole of creation.

EXAMEN 6: FRIENDSHIP

1. I close my eyes and quick ask God to make his presence known to me in this prayer period.

Sitting up straight, I place my hands palms up, in a gesture of receptivity.

Jesus, my friend, please stay with me.

2. During his time on earth, Jesus made very good friends with people other than the apostles. Among his closest friends were Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

I remember my dearest, closest friends.

Without making a sound, I name them one by one, inside my head.

(pause)

I say a short prayer of thanksgiving to God for all the good times I've had with these friends.

(pause)

3. Looking back on the day, I ask myself what kind of friend I have been today. Was I a source of encouragement and understanding to them, in my words and in my actions?

Did I help them make good and responsible decisions?

Or have I done the opposite?

(pause)

4. If I have done something wrong to a friend, like saying something hurtful, or neglecting him when he was in need, or betraying his trust, I thank the Lord for making me aware. I think of something that I can do tomorrow to make up for what I have done—perhaps to find the courage to say, “I am sorry.”

5. If I have been a good friend, I thank the Lord too, for giving me the grace to say the right words or do the right things. I ask him also to send more good friendships along my way.

(pause)

6. If you wish, you can compose a short, personal, closing prayer telling Jesus that You want him too as a friend.

Lord Jesus, draw me into your friendship.

EXAMEN 7: TECHNOLOGY

1. I quiet myself and slow my breathing.

I sit still for a moment.

I turn down the volume on my random thoughts and preoccupations.

(pause)

2. It is quite unthinkable these days to think of a world without gadgets.

Technology has become an essential part of our lives.

We all rely on computers to get things done.

Our phones have become highly sophisticated machines capable of many tasks.

What one or two examples of technology am I most grateful for right now?

(pause)

3. It is so easy to take all this technology for granted.

I reflect on how my life would have been without all them.

How could have this day turned out without computers, mobile phones, and the internet?

I look through my day and discover how these machines have made my life easier and more enjoyable.

(pause)

4. If we are not careful, technology can also produce harmful effects.

Have there been times when gadgets distracted me from my work, instead of enhancing it?

Have gadgets caused me to become more isolated, instead of being connected?

Have gadgets exposed me to dangers situations or caused me to get into trouble?

I look back on these situations and try to learn from them.

(pause)

5. I compose a prayer asking God for the grace to use all these gifts and blessings responsibly

...that I may make wise choices

...that I may avoid occasions of sin

...that I may use this technology for the greater glory of God.

Together we pray....

Glory be to the Father...

EXAMEN 8: HOME

1. Let us begin by sitting up straight, closing our eyes, and taking a few deep breaths. We ask God to make His presence felt as we begin our Examen, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...

2. We spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for the gift of life. We say *Thank You* for one or two things simple things today- the smile of a loved one, good weather, a satisfying snack.... anything, regardless of size, is worth celebrating
(pause)

3. From the moment we went to bed till the time we left for school in the morning, we have been surrounded by family. Most times, we are grateful for their special role in our lives.

We recall the times when family became our support system and cheering squad.
Or the occasions when they were our comfort zone and safety net.
(pause)

4. Other times, our home is not the peaceful place we want it to be. Recently, was there a time when going home was not a happy time? Was there situation lately when we did not act like the good brother/sister or son/daughter that we wanted to be?

We choose one such circumstance and pray over it.
What did we do right?
How could we have acted better?
(pause)

5. We end by thanking God for this Examen.
We express our hopes and wishes for our family.

EXAMEN 9: TIME

1. I close sit comfortably. I close my eyes.

I spend a few minutes of quiet to get in touch with myself and to be with the Lord.

Out of the 24 hours in one day, I especially dedicate this brief moment for prayerful reflection.

2. I thank God for every minute that I am alive-

for the time I was busy with school and extra-curricular activities

for the time I shared with my family and friends

especially for the time spent alone for rest and relaxation

(pause)

3. What I do with my time, when I actually do it it, and whom I choose to spend it with is important.

I look back on the day and notice how I spent this God-given time:

What does this tell me about my priorities and values in life?

Do I also give myself time to slow down, be more reflective, and be alone?

(pause)

4. Sometimes, I spend too much time on not so important matters.

Other times, I dedicate too little time for the more essential things.

What can I do about this?

(pause)

5. I look forward to tomorrow, thanking God for the gift of more time.

Let us pray.

Glory be...

EXAMEN 10: PLANS

1. I clear my mind and open my heart for what the Lord may be telling me during this Examen period.

Slowly and silently, I do a countdown in my head. I dispose my mind and my body for prayer 5.....4.....3....2.....1

Lord, help me to orient all my thoughts and feelings towards you.

2. I give thanks to the Almighty, for all the things that went right today.

For that tasks that were completed
For schedules that fell into place
Especially for the happy surprises
I thank God for all of them.

3. I look back to the beginning of the day.

I remember one thing that I set out to accomplish today.

Am I happy with how things turned out?

What contributed to the success?

Who helped me get things done?

4. In prayer, I express my thoughts and feelings to the Lord about this day.

What do I want to say to God?

What are my hopes for tomorrow?

5. Together we pray....Glory be to the Father...

EXAMEN 11: FEELINGS

Sign of the Cross

1. I begin by becoming more mindful of my breathing. I place my hands on my belly and notice how it rises with each inhalation and falls with each exhalation. I take deep slow breaths...in...and....out.....in and out..... (three times).

2. What has been the best part of my day so far?
All blessings, whether big or small, come from God.
I give thanks to God for one good thing today.

3. I review my day and pick out one dominant feeling I have been having.

I recall that emotion. I name it. I own it.

How did this feeling affect my own thoughts, actions, and speech?

How did I choose to react?

Was my reaction helpful or hurtful to myself? To others?

(pause)

4. If I am happy with how I dealt with my feelings, I thank God and congratulate myself.

If I know that I could have acted on my feelings better, I ask God what I could have done instead and pray for help.

(pause)

5. I close this *Examen* by expressing my hopes for the next day.

Together we pray the Lord's prayer.

EXAMEN 12: SPORTSMANSHIP

Sign of the Cross

1. I begin by asking the Lord for the grace of being able to look back on my thoughts, feelings, and actions today.

Dearest Lord help me to review my day with you.

2. Whether as a player or as a spectator, I thank the Lord for the opportunity to enjoy the games.

For the break from the classroom
For the chance to improve my skills
For the joy of being part of a team
For the thrill of competition

3. I ask myself:
In what ways did I feel like a winner?

By playing fair
By being kind to others
By keeping my cool
By giving it my best

4. I ask myself:
In what ways do I feel less than a winner?

Did I engage in trash talk?
Was I too proud?
Did I lose my temper?
Was I dishonest?

5. During these days of friendly competition,
I say a prayer to ask God
that whether we win or lose the game,
we may score many points for good sportsmanship
and all end up as winners.

Glory be...

EXAMEN 13: MY BODY

It is best that the students are positioned at least an arm's length away from each other.

1. We begin our prayer by standing up straight, feet apart, and hands on our sides.
We take deep breaths.... inhale [watch your chest rise as the air fills your lungs]....
and exhale [feel the warm air as it leaves our bodies] (2-3X)

As we breathe in, we invite God's Spirit to fill our being.

Lord, stay with me.

As we breathe out, we release all our worries and doubts.

Jesus, be my rock.

2. We place our hand in a praying position at the chest level, both palms touching each other and the fingers pointing upwards.

Slowly, release both hands and use them to draw a big circle around our bodies by extending the arms wide to each side. Let the palms meet again above our heads, with the fingers pointing upwards. We slowly bring them back down to the chest level.

As we do this, whisper very softly, just enough for only yourselves to hear,

Lord, I thank you that I am wonderfully made.

We do this 3 more times, each time saying thank you to God for the gift of our bodies.

3. We then place our hands on our hips, with elbows bent, back straight, and feet together.
We stand on our toes, gently lifting our heels above the ground.
We think about where our legs and feet have brought us today-
to places near and far; hurrying or slowing down; with others or alone
We do this 3X, each time inhaling and exhaling.
4. We then go into a squatting position with our feet apart, hands in a praying position, and our knees bent.
Let us reflect on the times we have stayed put in one place-
focusing on our day's work, keeping still and paying attention, or just simply taking a break
We hold this position for a few seconds....8....7...6...5...4...3....2....1
5. We stand straight. We then bring our right elbow over to the other side of the body, using our left hand to help keep it close to the front chest.
We think about all the things we have accomplished with our arms and hands.
We hold this position for a few seconds....8....7...6...5...4...3....2....1
We do it again on the opposite side, left elbow over the right chest.
We hold this position for a few seconds....8....7...6...5...4...3....2....1
6. Finally, we pray about all the things we have yet to do, the unfinished work, the pending projects, and our plans for the future. We stretch our neck, bending it forward (3...2...1...), backward (3...2...1...), to the right (3...2...1...) and to the left (3...2...1...).
7. We end with our palms back to a praying position. We bowing down from the waist as we say
Glory be...

And we resume our upright position as we say

As it was in the beginning...

EXAMEN 14: TEACHERS (can be led by a student)

Sign of the cross.

1. I sit comfortably with my back against the chair, my feet flat on the floor, and my hands on my lap.

With my eyes closed, I keep still, focusing my entire attention on the soles of my feet...the weight of my legs pressing down from above....the feel of the floor pushing from below...

When I am ready, I pray silently, *Dearest Lord, great teacher, teach me your ways.*

2. Looking back on the day with gratitude, I give thanks for all the knowledge acquired and the insights gained inside and outside the classroom.

I pray silently, *Dearest Lord, I give thanks for the many things I learned today.*

(pause)

3. I remember the classes I've had today and recall in particular the teachers who have taught me since this morning.

- Do I appreciate the efforts of my teachers in molding me according to the 4 C's of Ateneo?
- What words or lines spoken by a teacher today made the most impact on me?
- What from my teacher's life and work inspire me to be a better person?

I pray silently, *Dearest Lord, help me recognize the good around me.*

(pause)

4. If I had mistreated my teacher today, if I was disrespectful or disobedient, I ask myself how I feel about it.

- What happened? Why did I react that way?
- How could I have acted better?

I say a short prayer for myself and that teacher.

Dearest Lord, with your guidance, I shall do better next time.

5. I express to God my hopes and plans for tomorrow.

(pause)

Together we pray, *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...*

EXAMEN 15: OBSESSIONS

Sign of the cross.

1. I begin with an exercise in surrendering....

I drop from my hands any work that has made it busy...

I release from my mind any thoughts that have kept it preoccupied..

I let go from my heart any worries that have left it troubled...

2. Everything around me is a gift from God.

I think of all the things, places, experiences, and people I encountered today and how they made me feel particularly “gifted” by God.

I offer a word of gratitude to the Lord.

(pause)

3. Everything in the world was created so that I may praise, reverence, and serve the Lord.

I think of how these gifts have enabled me to do exactly that....

Praising God...

Reverencing the Almighty...

Serving the Lord in ways big and small.

(pause)

4. There are times, however, when I can become too attached to these gifts, too hooked by them.

It takes up a big part of my mind, distracting me from what I should be doing.

It occupies a large space in my heart, leaving no room for other people.

I make an honest effort to name one thing that is becoming an unhealthy obsession for me....

Games, gadgets, and social media?

Grades, sports, and other goals?

Friends, crushes, and relationships?

Money, clothes, appearance?

I ask the Lord to remind me that this obsession is not the most important thing in my life. I ask him to teach me to put things in the proper order, to give each gift their right priority.

5. Together we pray.... Our Father....

EXAMEN 16: MY BODY Version 2

This can be prayed sitting or standing.

Sign of the cross.

1. I begin my prayer by standing/sitting up straight and both hands- one over the other- resting on the center of my chest.

As I inhale, I think of the air traveling down the respiratory passages from the nose... the trachea...the bronchi...and finally to the air sacs in my lungs.

I thank God for the air that I breathe- life giving oxygen that sustains all my bodily processes.

2. I rest my hands on my belly.

My body depends on the nourishment provided by the food that I eat. Through digestion, food is processed to make nutrients available to sustain my growth and development. I PRAISE God for the wonder of digestion.

I think about what I “feed” myself to keep me going throughout the day....

Does this intake keep me healthy and energetic? Or does it poison and weaken me?

(pause)

3. I place my hands over my face. Slowly and gently, I touch my eyes....my ears....my nose...my lips.

My senses help me to engage the world- to see, hear, smell, taste and feel God present in my immediate surroundings. With these senses, I REVERENCE the Creator.

I think about how I perceive the world-

Am I able to appreciate what is good, delightful, and hopeful in everything around me?

Or do I allow myself to be deadened by what is wicked, dreadful, and desperate?

(pause)

4. I grasp my limbs, holding my arms or my legs tightly.

My ligaments, joints, bones, and muscles work in a coordinated fashion so that I can move with ease and efficiency. Movement allows me to SERVE God and my fellow human beings.

I reflect on my actions for the day-

Did I walk with others and keep them company? Did I extend a helping hand?

Or did I run away from responsibility or push others away?

(pause)

5. Slowly, we return to our original prayer position.

Lord, we glorify you through our bodies.

Together we pray, *Glory be...*

EXAMEN 17: HEALTH

Sign of the cross

1. I place myself in a comfortable sitting position- comfortable but not too relaxed.
I close my eyes and stay still.
I listen to the voice of Jesus within me, telling me over and over,
I love you. You are mine.

(pause)

2. I thank the Lord for the gift of my health-

- for a clear mind and stable disposition
- for a healthy appetite and good digestion
- for a strong heart and clear lungs
- for supple limbs and flexible joints
- for natural defenses against harmful elements

(pause)

3. Lord, I look back on my day to see how everything that I accomplished today was made possible because of the gift of a sound mind and a sound body:

- The sights, sounds, and tastes were enjoyed today...
including the thoughts and feelings that were expressed...
and the places that were reached. . .

all these and many more, I look back with wonder. I am amazed that all this is possible because of the gift of my healthy mind and body.

(pause)

4. Lord, I recall my actions today to see whether
I have done something that compromised my own health and well-being.

- Did I make unhealthy choices?
- Did I do anything that placed myself in danger?
- Was I a risk to someone else's well-being?

(pause)

5. Lord, I end my *Examen* with a special intention for all who are not in good health-
the sick, the dying

I end by praying for my safety and health and those of all my loved ones.

Glory be...

EXAMEN 18: LAUGHTER

Sign of the cross

1. I stay still.

I close my eyes

I calm my breathing.

I put a smile in my heart,

knowing that God is here.

(pause)

2. I thank the Lord for the happiness and humor that He brought me today...

For all the times I found myself grinning,

to those times I was reeling in uncontrollable laughter,

THANK YOU, LORD!

3. I look back on all those pockets of quiet consolation...

those moments of bliss...

those explosions of joy.

I recall the persons with whom I shared these happy moments

and the situations that brought them about.

(pause)

4. Even the times I was clumsy or unsure about myself

those occasions when I was clearly at fault

or simply put, when I was just being my imperfect self...

I look back on them with a pinch of kindness

and a huge dose of humor.

I know that God takes me seriously

but He also laughs with me

and takes delight in me.

(pause)

5. At the end of this *Examen*, I behold God smiling at me...

and I smile back.

EXAMEN 19: TESTS (after examinations)

Sign of the cross

1. I take a comfortable position and quiet myself. . .
I turn down my thoughts. . .
I ask God to help me feel His presence around me and in me. . .
2. After a day of examinations, I just want to be grateful that I have finished them.

Regardless of how well or how poorly I did, I just want to say, “Thank God, that’s over.”

I also take time to thank the Lord for the people who helped me in my preparations for the exam.

3. What am I feeling right now?
Am I... satisfied with what I was able to accomplish?
... or anxious about the outcome?
... pleased with my answers?
... or just plain relieved?
I take time to identify what exactly I am feeling.

(pause)

4. I look back on my preparations for this / these exam(s).
I reflect on how I studied-

Which of my study techniques proved most helpful? I take note of them.

Which ones were the least successful? I make sure to not repeat the same mistake.

(pause)

5. I look back on how I took the test(s).

Was I confident? Can I say that I had given it my best effort?

Was I honest? How did I respond to the temptation to cheat- whether to get answers or to give them away?

(pause)

6. At the end of the day, I want to celebrate what I have learned.

What has been the most important lesson I picked up from this process of studying and test-taking?

I close this *Examen* with gratitude and hope.

Life is never-ending learning and I am thankful for the opportunity to have a good start in school.

Glory be...

EXAMEN 20: WORDS

Sign of the cross

1. I quiet down and shift my focus on God.

I ask God to send me His Holy Spirit that I may look back on my day
with kindness, humility, and love.

(pause)

2. I call to mind the people with whom I interacted today.

I look back on the exchanges that I've had with them.

For those words that made me feel positive, encouraged, and inspired,
I express my gratitude to the Lord.

(pause)

3. Next, I examine my own use of words.

Did I choose my words carefully? And hold my tongue when it was necessary?

When I spoke, did I communicate the truth? Or was I insincere and deceptive?

Was I considerate and kind? Or did I speak harshly and hurtfully?

Did I use language that built others up? Or did I use words to put others down?

(pause)

4. I pray to Jesus, the Word of God.

I ask for the grace to know the power of words-
to create and to heal,
to connect and communicate,
to share meaning.

May my words give glory to God and help bring about peace in the world.

Amen.

EXAMEN 21: DECISIONS

Sign of the cross

1. I close my eyes and become aware of the Spirit of God within me.

In silence, I ask that I may be able to look back on the day
the way the Lord wants me to see it.

2. There is always something to be thankful for, if we just take time to look.

What do I choose to be grateful for today?

(pause)

3. Everyday, I make many choices-

Some of them are big and they have clear consequences.

Others are small and seem to have no immediate impact in my life as an adolescent.

What to eat... what to say... whom to hang out with... how to do my homework... when
to rest...etc.

I look back on one decision I had to make today....

(pause)

4. Whether they are big or small, my everyday choices help form the person
that I am becoming.

Did my choice of words or actions contribute to my growth as a student, as an
Atenean, as a child of God?

Or did my choice lead to the other direction and bring me farther from the person
God intended me to be?

(pause)

5. *Dearest Lord,*

*I pray that I may always be aware of my inner voice
telling me to always choose what is good and true.*

In times of indecision,

send me your Spirit

that I may always listen intently

and do that which brings me closer to you.

Amen.

EXAMEN 22: TRUTH

Sign of the cross.

1. In silence, I ask the Spirit of God to make me more aware of his presence in my life right now. I ask for the grace to be honest with myself and to be honest before God.

2. I look back on all the small blessings that are hidden in the nooks and corners of my day. I focus on one blessing in particular and imagine how things would have turned out today without this blessing. I spend some time to say “Thanks.”

(pause)

3. God knows everything about me. There is no reason to hide. And yet sometimes I find myself not ready to handle the truth:

- Am I careful with the information I pass to others?
- Do I sometimes tell lies just to make myself look good?
- Do I have a hard time coming face to face with my own feelings?
- When someone points out something that is hard to accept, do I resist it or go into denial?

I take a minute to think about how I deal with the truth.
I acknowledge my struggles and present them before the Lord.

(pause)

4. The Lord assures us that “The Truth will set you free.” (*John 8:32*)

I pray for the grace to be courageous and live in the truth-- the truth that is Jesus Christ.

Lord, help me to become a truthful person-

To be careful with my words

To be sincere in my actions

To try to seek what is true.

*To be always open to accepting the truth,
even if it is difficult.*

Help me to feel secure in you, Lord, the source of all Truth.

5. Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

EXAMEN 23: LISTENING

Sign of the cross.

1. I clear my mind so that my heart may be open to something different, perhaps even something unexpected from the Lord.

Lord, help me to listen to your Spirit.

2. Every day, I communicate with different persons.

At times, when I speak with them, I feel that I am heard, valued, and appreciated.

Other times, talking to others can leave me feeling anxious, frustrated, or neglected.

I reflect on how speaking with someone today made me feel. Of the many voices I heard today, which one affected me deeply- whether positively or negatively?

(pause)

3. An important part of communicating with others is listening to them.

How do I rate myself as a listener?

- Was I respectful to others?
- Did I try to really understand what was being said?
- Could I let go of my fixed mindsets and preconceived notions?

I reflect on how I received others today. Lord, could I have been a better listener?

(pause)

4. Finally, I take time out to listen to my own heart.

When I strip off all pretensions and forget about what others may think, what do I hear deep inside me? What is my heart saying to me?

Lord, help me listen to your Spirit.

(pause)

Our Father in heaven...

EXAMEN 24: Sa Wikang Filipino

Sa ngalan ng Ama, ng Anak, at ng Espiritu Santo. Amen.

Sabay-sabay nating gunitain ang araw na lumipas. Ating pasalamatan ang magagandang bagay at buong pagpapakumbabang aminin ang ating mga naging pagkukulang.

Simulan nating sa pagiging payapa. Sikaping makapagpahinga at pakawalan ang anumang kaabalahan ng isipan. Isiping ikaw at ang Panginoon lamang ang naririto sa ngayon. Ipikit ang mga mata kung ito'y makakatulong. Hingin sa Kaniya ang liwanag nang iyong Makita kung ano ang ginagawa Niya sa iyong buhay.

Sa paglingon sa mga lumipas na sandal, gawing mas malalim ang pakikipag-ugnay mo sa Panginoon. Ikuwento sa kanya ang mga pangyayari para bang nakikipag-usap sa isang kaibigan:

2. Ano ang pinakamagandang bagay na nangyari ngayon? Ito ba ay maliit o malaking bagay na maituturing? Balikan ang pangyayaring ito, muli itong tingnan, hawakan, pakinggan o namnamin... at kung ano man iyon, buong puso itong ipagpasalamat sa Panginoon. Pasalamatan Siya sa isang buong araw nang pagbubuhos ng biyaya.
3. Alalahanin ang lahat ng nangyari ngayon, mula nang ika'y nagising hanggang sa kasalukuyan... ano ang ginawa mo sa araw na ito...paano mo ginamit ang oras.. sino-sino ang mga nakasama mo... ano ang nagdulot ng kalungkutan, galit, o pagsisisi? Humingi ng tawad para sa mga nagawang pagakakamali. Humingi ng tawad para sa mga bagay na hindi mo nagawa.

At panghuli, ialay sa Panginoon ang anumang balak para sa susunod na araw at hingin ang patuloy niyang gabay tungo sa mas matagumpay na bukas.

Sabay-sabay nating dasalin ang *Ama Namin*.

Credits: Nikki James Lee, SJ and Lea Dautil

EXAMEN 25: THE ORDINARY

Sign of the cross.

1. I enter a quiet and still space where I can be alone with God.

There, I ask God to fill me with His gentle and loving presence.
I make sure that I am not distracted by other thoughts and sensations.
This time is exclusively for me and my God.

(pause)

2. I look back on the day with attention to the details that I otherwise would have easily overlooked and forgotten.

No, I will not prioritize the unusual and unexpected events. There will be another time for that. Instead, I will focus on the ordinary and familiar— just my usual way of going about the day. Perhaps, from something that I have been taking for granted all this time, I will be able to notice something new, something different.

(pause)

3. What part of my routine do I want to be grateful for today? Perhaps it is something for which I have never shown gratitude to God. I choose one and take time out to appreciate how this ordinary part of my life has always been a hidden blessing after all.

(pause)

4. Likewise, something that I experience or do on a regular basis may actually be causing harm to myself or to others. In the past, I may have overlooked these effects, but today, I shall ponder on it. I face it with honesty and ask myself what I want to do about it.

(pause)

5. Praying with the ordinary helps me see that everything is an opportunity to be grateful. Even the normal, everyday components of my life can be a source of blessing or harm to myself and to others. I end this Examen hopeful that I can now be more attentive to them.

Glory be...

EXAMEN 26: Saying YES

Sign of the Cross

1. I spend the next few minutes focused on Jesus who wants to spend some time with me. With nothing else to offer the Lord but my undivided attention, I drop everything, sit comfortably, and listen to the words of Scripture.

2. In the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 1, verse 38, Mary said:

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

3. Every day, we say YES to each other in varied ways.

I say YES to my friends when am sensitive to his/her needs.

I say YES to my school when I perform my tasks with diligence.

I say YES to my countrymen when I serve without thought of reward.

Come to think of it, when my words, thoughts, and actions respond to God’s invitation to be a little more compassionate, committed, and generous, I am saying YES to the Lord himself.

I recall those big and small YESes I have made today.

4. There may also have been times when the YESes I gave to others, even to our Lord himself, were half-hearted or easily forgotten.

When I said YES but was not sincere about it.

When I said YES but got distracted along the way.

When I said YES but had only my best interest in mind.

I look back with regret these with regret and ask pardon for them.

5. Because God’s YES to humanity is an everlasting YES, I can be assured of his commitment, no matter who I am or what I have done. I pray with hope that I can say my future YESes with love and conviction. Amen.

Glory be to the Father...

EXAMEN 27: SALT OF THE EARTH

Sign of the Cross

1. Once more, I reach the end of the school day and gather all my thoughts, feelings, and experiences together and bring them into prayer. I present them to the Lord with openness and humility.

2. I allow myself to be inspired by the words of the Gospel:

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Matthew 5: 13

3. Jesus instructs his followers to be like SALT.

Salt is an essential ingredient that enhances the flavor of food.

As I review my day, I call to mind the ways I have seasoned my day with joy, purpose, and enthusiasm. One by one I thank God for these blessings. (read twice)

4. Salt has other functions as well. It keeps food from spoiling. Living things need salt to regulate body fluids and to maintain muscle and nerve function. Simply put, salt is life. Thus, to be salt of the earth is also to be life-giving to others. I ask myself, in what way have I helped bring life to others today—when I was around my friends, interacted with my classmates, and spent time with my family? (read twice)

5. Jesus says, if salt loses its taste, it will not be able to do the work for which it was intended. I look back on any incident today wherein I was close to losing my flavor. Was it because of laziness? Was it due to fatigue? Did I feel bad about something or get into a misunderstanding? Whatever it is, I face it with honesty and speak with the Lord about it. (read twice)

6. Finally, I look forward to the next day. Tomorrow brings me new opportunities to savor what life has to offer. I pray to God that I can face them with gratitude, courage, and hope.

Our Father...

EXAMEN 28: EXHAUSTED! (adapted from *Reimagining the Examen*)

Sign of the cross.

1. I place myself in a prayer position that best prepares me to reflect on my day. During the examen, my body is at prayer too and how I position myself signals to the Lord that I am ready to listen.
2. We listen to the words of Scripture, in John 4: 4-5

“So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.”

3. Which part of my day do I find to be the most tiring, most exhausting? Did it drain me physically, mentally, or spiritually? I return to this part and examine it closely.
4. What was so tiring about it, what was the most difficult thing about that moment? I allow myself to feel what I had felt during that moment. This time, however, I bring Jesus along with me and dialogue with Him about how I handled that situation.

If I had managed this time well, I express my gratitude to God.
If I had done poorly, I ask God how I could have done things better.

5. There are many things I can learn from this experience, like:
 - My typical response to pressure
 - Better ways of coping with stressful situations
 - Deciding which matters are urgent and which ones could wait

I reflect on one important learning, give thanks to God for it, and commit it to memory.

Our Father...

EXAMEN 29: STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Sign of the Cross

- I begin by acknowledging God's active presence in my life. In silence, I ponder on the words of Scripture:

*(Lord,) You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb
I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works!
My very self you know. Psalm 139:13-14*

- As I grow up, I learn many things about myself. More and more, I get to know my personality, my values, my abilities, and my unique way of doing things. For as long as I am alive, there will always be something new to discover.

- There are skills that seem to come so naturally to me.

My unique set of hobbies, interests and talents make me who I am.
I may also find that I possess some positive character traits—
Resiliency, openness, determination, patience, creativity, kindness, friendliness,
intelligence, humor, gentleness, even my sense of adventure.
I reflect on how one or more of these gifts were put into use today.

I pause to give thanks to God for these strengths. I ask God to inspire me to use them for the greater good and for God's glory.

- However, I am also a work in progress. There are things I am still struggling to learn, skills that I cannot seem to master, and abilities that I can only wish I had.

I must admit that there are things about me that I need to correct. It could be laziness, pride, cowardice, disrespect, stubbornness, or my self-centeredness. I look back on my day to see if these things got the better of me today.

I acknowledge these weaknesses and ask God for guidance and motivation.

- Finally, I recognize that there is still so much to know about me. I am in a journey of constant self-discovery and self-improvement. Perhaps I need to be patient with myself. In prayer, I put my trust in God who created me wonderfully out of love and believes in what I can become.

I end this Examen period by giving glory to God.... Glory to the Father....

EXAMEN 30: EXPECTATIONS

Sign of the cross.

- I allow my mind and body to be wrapped in stillness. I used this time to be alone with God who desires to spend some alone time with me after a busy day.
- In Psalm 46, I am told:

Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.
The LORD of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

- With gratitude in my heart, I look back to the very beginning of this day and remember my expectations for the day. Was there something that I looked forward to the most? Was I anticipating an encounter with someone important to me? Was I eagerly awaiting a positive outcome, perhaps a reward for all my efforts? Whatever it may have been, I use it as my starting point for this examen.

(pause)

- If I find that my expectations have actually been met, then I celebrate by relishing the experience and appreciating what worked and how things fell into place. I will not forget to show gratitude to God who has made all this possible. I recognize the people who helped make my expectation a reality.

(pause)

- If things didn't go exactly that way I had wanted, then I use the time to reflect on the matter. What went wrong? How do I feel about it? Can I name the emotion? In prayer, I ask God to make me humble enough to accept the situation. I ask God if there were hidden blessings that I failed to see or important lessons that I may have neglected.

(pause)

- I end the Examen by thanking God for this encounter with Him. God is the source of all the goodness in my life, planned or otherwise. I set my sights on the next day, presenting my hopes and expectations before the Lord. I ask Him to bless and purify them, so that I may think and act in accordance with His most holy will.

Together we pray.... Our Father...

EXAMEN 31: PRIORITIES

The sign of the cross.

- Once more, I find myself at the end of the day. I prepare to look back on the events and encounters that have brought me to this point.
- I open my heart and mind to the words of Jesus in the Gospel according to Luke:
Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. REPEAT: For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.
- Dearest Lord, my day has been full. My time was divided between many things to do and many tasks to accomplish. How I spent my energy and where I gave much of my efforts tell me about my priorities for today.
- What was the most important on my agenda for me this day? Was I able to give it the attention it deserved? Did I put my mind and heart to it? What does it reveal about what is most valuable to me right now?
- I reflect on the who's, what's, and why's that made the details of this day possible. I show gratitude to God for making it all happen.
- Sometimes, even if I am aware of my need to prioritize something, I am side-tracked by things that are less urgent and less essential. I check my day to see if something ate up too much of my time and distracted me from the more important matters.
- I realize that the entire day is a precious gift from God and I ask that I learn to spend it well—to cherish quality time with friends and family, with self, and with my God. It need not be filled up with activity—just an awareness of the giftedness of each God-given moment.

Lord, may my entire day be a song of praise to you.

Glory be to the Father...