

AT THE MEETING

OPENING PRAYER

We begin, as usual, with a short time of stillness, putting ourselves in the presence of God and asking for grace that everything that happens in our mind, heart and imagination may be directed purely to the praise and service of God. *Some communities use the CLC opening prayer, or some other formal prayer, to conclude this brief time of stillness. Others use a minute or two of suitable music.*

GRACE:

We ask for the grace to be sensitive to the presence of God in our daily lives.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 19: 11-13 (ask someone to read this aloud).

SILENCE

Ten minutes silent prayer remembering my life and prayer since the last meeting. How have I found the prayer this last fortnight? What events in my life and prayer do I wish to share with my community?

SHARING AND LISTENING

- Remember that this is a listening, not a discussion, group.
- Include a second round if there is time.
- It's good to conclude this time of reflection with a short time of silence, praying for each other, and with a formal prayer, such as the *Glory Be* or the *Lord's Prayer*.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER, if wanted.

PRACTICALITIES: This is an opportunity for any reports, eg from members who have attended a CLC event, for questions, for discussion about any concerns, for news about any work or mission in which members might be involved, or for any business the group might need to sort out.

REVIEW OF THE MEETING

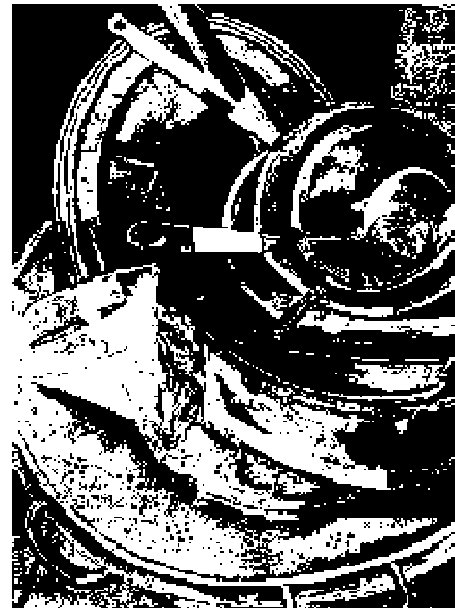
- What was good for me in this meeting?
- What was not so good? What would I have liked to be different?
- What do I want to take away with me?

CLOSING PRAYER (Many communities use the CLC closing prayer.)



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Finding God in all things



**TOWARDS
MEETING SIX**

PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE MEETING

A reminder of the suggested stages of prayer . . .

PREPARATORY PRAYER Begin in the usual way.

ASKING FOR WHAT I WANT

I ask for the grace to be sensitive to the presence of God in my daily life.

MATERIAL FOR PRAYER

Try to use the prayer of Examen, as explained below, each day. If you would like some background scripture, you could pray with 1 Kings 19: 11-13. Finally, as preparation for the meeting, reflect over the whole fortnight, using the pattern of the Examen.

TALKING WITH THE LORD

Ensure that at the end of your prayer, you spend some time talking directly with the Lord. You may like to end the prayer with a *Glory Be* or the Lord's prayer.

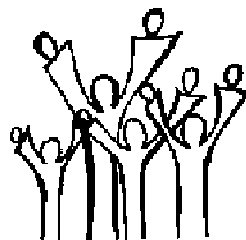
REVIEW OF PRAYER After the prayer - and perhaps with a cuppa! - take some time to look back over your prayer time and jot down a few things which moved you or which you particularly remember. Don't try to remember everything, but trust that God will draw to your attention whatever is important.

FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

More than any other prayer, the 'EXAMEN' is the central prayer of St Ignatius. It is a *prayer of looking back*. It is not just reflecting on what has gone wrong but a wider look at what has happened during my day - the good and the bad - trying to see where God has been.

If we practise the Examen, we will grow to know ourselves and our moods, and with the help of God, see in our prayer the way that God is moving in our lives. As our hearts become more sensitive, we will recognise God more quickly, so that eventually we will be sensitive to the God who is not just in "holy" things, but the God who is in **ALL** things.

The Examen is best used regularly. Most people find it helpful in the quiet time before going to sleep. It takes around a quarter-of-an-hour. The prayer covers five points, set out on the right.



Dermot Preston sj
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1. No matter what I am worrying about ...

Stop!

God is with me - quiet perhaps, but always there. I remember that God has created all things. All I have is a gift from God.

Is there something I would especially like to give thanks for today?

3. Now I remember through the day starting from when I woke up. I remember the people I met and the things that have happened.

- *On the whole, was it a "good" or a "bad" day?*

- *Was it a normal day, or unusual in some way?*

- *Whom did I meet during the day?*

- *Was there something surprising:
... a long lost friend ...*

... or an awkward old enemy?

- *Does something special come to mind?
... a beautiful sunset ...*

..... something I was told ...

... something on the TV?

THE FIVE POINTS OF THE EXAMEN

2. I ask God to shine light into my heart so that when I look back over the day I may be able to see God working in the things that have happened.

- *In everything that happened how did I feel? Joyful? Sad? Angry? Scared? Maybe I felt "great" and was really happy? What caused my feelings and did the change during the day?*

God guides us through our moods and feelings. Normally God's way is (in a deep sense) peaceful and consoling. If your day was disturbed or if you were uneasy, can you sense where that uneasiness was coming from? Like a sailor buffeted by different winds, we are affected by many different feelings. The better we come to know these swirling breezes, the easier it is to see the perhaps subtle movements of God in our lives.

4. An important question to ask is: What can I be proud of today? (There will be things. If you can't think of anything then you haven't looked hard enough!)

I will give thanks for this.

But, also, did I turn away from God during the day? Maybe I turned a blind eye when it

suited me? Did I recognise God in that homeless woman, that annoying child or that spiteful old man?

I will say a prayer asking forgiveness for anything I may have done to ignore or hinder God's love during this past day.

I will ask especially for the graces of healing and strength.

5. The final part of the prayer is to look forward to tomorrow.

We are people of hope. Let us remember that God will be with us then.