

# A N N U A L E X A M E N

*Taking time to learn about our physical health,  
our emotional health, our relational health, our  
vocational health, and our spiritual health.*





# OVERVIEW

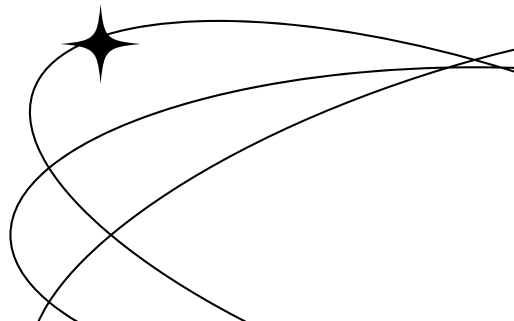
Introduction

Section 1: General Examination of My Life


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1. Physical Health
2. My Emotional Health
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5. My Spiritual Health

Prayers for the New Year



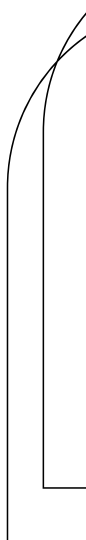
# INTRODUCTION




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400 years ago, Ignatius of Loyola crafted a genius way of prayer. His method helped a person reflect back upon their day and their life in terms of how one experienced God in both a challenging and comforting way. The Daily Examen is a method where we take the past 24 hours to think and pray through our day to raise the awareness of our own hearts of how God has moved within the past 24 hours. This Great Annual Examen is based on Ignatius' way of reflection and prayer, but as a review of our year—a way of thinking and praying through the past 12 months as a way of giving us a sort of GPS—a way to really see where we are right now on life's journey and by God's grace and help—to get to where we want to go!

It's a simple question and answer exercise where you work through some questions to help you reflect on the past year and anticipate the next year to come. It's called the "examen" because in this exercise we take an examination of how we've "done" in life—on the journey and in different aspects. In some ways, many of us will admit that this past year has "undone" us—we've felt spent, done or only surviving and perhaps barely surviving at that! However as you reflect upon this past year, it's my hope that you'll have a GPS—a sort of marker that will help you discern where you are and how you are and where you want to go this next year.



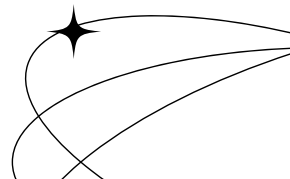
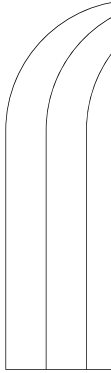
# INTRODUCTION pt. 2



It is a way of reviewing the past 12 months but in doing so, to allow ourselves to evaluate our life in 5 major categories: our physical health, our emotional health, our relational health, our vocational health, and our spiritual health. While every part of life is indeed spiritual, we may find it helpful to break down life into a few major categories. I've done this for you here and given you a final category of your spiritual life to help you reflect more in a focused way on you and God.

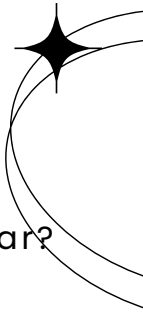
Sit with each category and work through the questions slowly. Slow is the key. This is not an exercise where the "first response is the right response." In fact, in thinking more deeply about each question, you will probably find that a longer look—and a lingering reflection will allow issues and concerns to rise that a quick response will simply negate.

Take a few days to do this rather than one sitting. By looking back and gaining insight, we will not be so apt as to repeat the mistakes we made this past year.



# SECTION 01

GENERAL EXAMINATION OF MY LIFE



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1. What are the most important events that have happened to me or in me this past year?

2. What are the greatest breakthroughs in any category of my life this past year?

*(physical, emotional, relational, vocational, spiritual)*

3. What has been my greatest struggle in my life this past year?

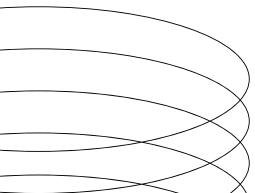


4. What has been my greatest and deepest loss this past year?

5. What area has consumed my thinking, attention and focus this past year?  
*(health, relationships, future, etc.)*

6. Where have I felt most vulnerable in my life?

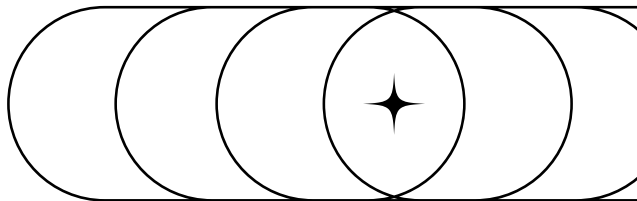
7. Where I have I most experienced the presence of God this past year and why?



8. In the past 12 months, where I have experienced the greatest sense of consolation?  
*(peace, happiness, contentment, serenity, beauty, etc.)*

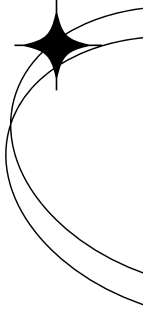
9. In the past 12 months, what area of my life has given me the most desolation?  
*(distress, sadness, depression, anxiety, fear, etc.)*

10. What ONE word would tend to sum up this past year?



# SECTION 02

FIVE CATEGORIES OF MY LIFE



## 1. My Physical Health

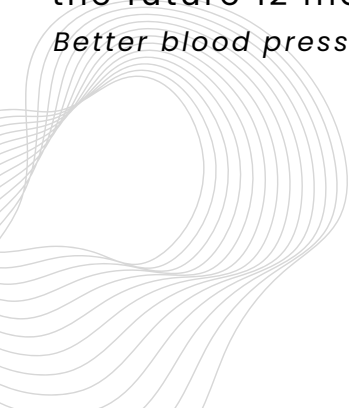
List five words that describe my physical condition and well-being this past year.

How many hours of sleep can I honestly say I get each night? (8 is recommended)

What choices have you given attention to regarding your health this past 12 months?

What specific goals do you want to achieve in the future 12 months?

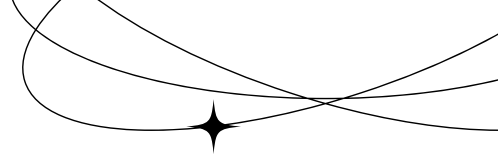
*Better blood pressure, exercise, etc.*





# SECTION 02

*FIVE CATEGORIES OF MY LIFE*

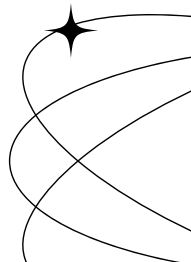
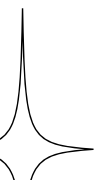


## **2. My Emotional Health**

List five FEELINGS that you believe had dominated (positive or negative from your perspective) your life this past year:

What area of your life gives you the greatest sense of internal stress?

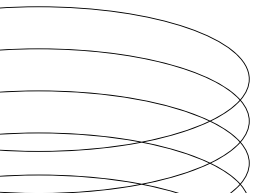
How do you feel about your emotional well-being this past year?



What were you doing; who were you doing this with and where were you physically when you believe you were the HAPPIEST this past year:



What were you doing; who were you doing this with and where were you when you experienced the greatest feeling of SADNESS this past year:



# SECTION 02

FIVE CATEGORIES OF MY LIFE

## 3. My Vocational Health

List five words which best describe your job/vocation/career?

This past year, have you (*Circle one*) lived to work or worked to live?

How are you feeling about your vocational journey ahead:

*I want to make a change this next year.*

*I want to continue as I am and just as I am.*

*I would like to use this next year to study and prepare for a vocational change.*

*I want to reassess and evaluate my vocational journey this next year.*

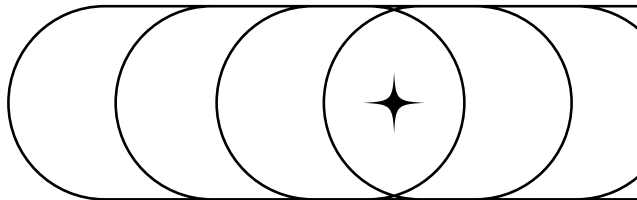
*I want to re-position myself in regard to my work this next year.*

I believe I work \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

Next year, I'd like to work \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

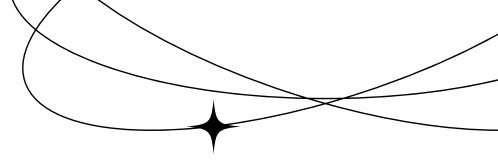
To do this, I will need to:

Is your job right now giving you a sense of contentment and satisfaction? Why or why not?



# SECTION 02

*FIVE CATEGORIES OF MY LIFE*



## **4. My Relational Health**

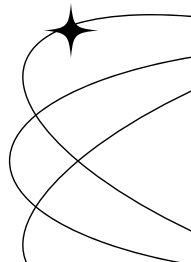
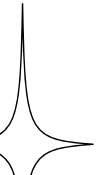
List the names of people who have been life-giving to you this past year:

Give a letter grade to your overall sense of having community- sharing life with others.

A-Excellent, B-Very good. C-Average D-Lacking in friends

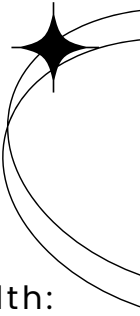
Is your life style and work schedule conducive to having the relationships you want and need?

Explain more in a few sentences.



# SECTION 02

FIVE CATEGORIES OF MY LIFE



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## 5. My Spiritual Health

List five words to describe your spiritual health:  
*(distant, intimate, excellent, very poor, no time, etc)*

How would you describe your prayer life this past year?

How do you feel about how you have worshipped this past year?

How you are feeling about your church experience?



What feels lacking to you in terms of your relationship with God?



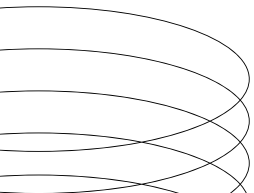
How has your image of God changed or matured this past year?




List five words that would characterize your image of God:



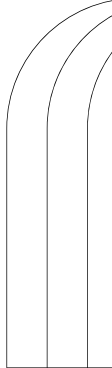
How has your relationship with God been challenged this past year?



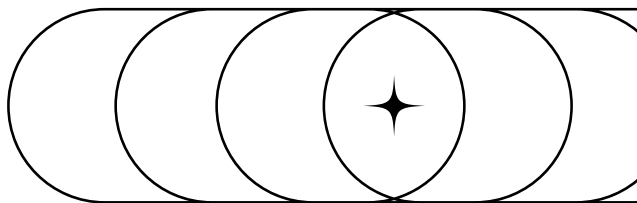


What are the 3 most important spiritual takeaways from this past year that you never want to forget:

Where was your deepest spiritual struggle—the place of the greatest wrestling with God or the place of your deepest lament?



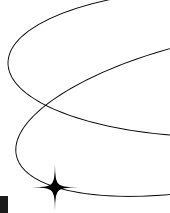
What people do you feel the most spiritually connected to in your life?





# PRAYERS

*End your time of The Annual Examen in prayer.*



## **Prayer of Gratitude:**

Share your gratitude for all the specific events, people, and growth you've experienced or witnessed.

## **Prayer for the Future Year:**

Spend some moments asking for God's blessing on the future 12 months.

## **Blessing by the Irish Priest, John O'Donohue:**

Blessed be the longing that brought you here and quickens your soul with wonder.

may you have the courage to listen to the voice of desire that disturbs you when you have settled for something safe.

may you have the wisdom to enter generously into your own unease to discover the new direction your longing wants you to take.

may the forms of your belonging – in love, creativity, and friendship – be equal to the grandeur and the call of your soul.

may the one you long for long for you. may your dreams reveal the destination of your desire.

may a secret providence guide your thought and nurture your feeling. may your mind inhabit your life with the sureness with which your body inhabits the world.

may your heart never be haunted by ghost-structures of old damage. may you come to accept your longing as divine urgency.

may you know the urgency which God longs for you.

