

words

# Words to Live By

words

## *The fruits of using the Examen*

I used to wonder if I would have been one of those “helicopter” parents if I had not been introduced to the Jesuits and Ignatian Spirituality as a student at the College of the Holy Cross. The Examen really became my lifeline when my children became teenagers. I would

hear about some appalling situation and resist the urge to fix it. I had learned to trust the Spirit through the Examen and, now, I had to trust the Spirit with my kids. When I did manage to be around for those occasional conversations when things that really mattered were discussed, I found that I was able to bring more focus and peace because I had learned to trust God in those difficult circumstances.

Now that my children are grown and on their own career paths, what gives me the most joy is taking care of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC). The wild ride of this economy has made fundraising for a nonprofit significantly more challenging; forcing some difficult decisions and courageous explorations

about other ways we might operate IVC. In all of this, the fruits of the Examen are a keen awareness that God is acting through the capable service of Ignatian Volunteers and that IVC will not only survive but also thrive.

No one has flown in, by helicopter or otherwise, to solve our financial woes, but that part of IVC can sometimes take too much of my focus. What God wants of me and IVC is that we pay faithful attention to situations that arise and that we ask, always, for the Spirit to guide us in our decision-making and planning. I had the same prayer when I was a new mother, scared out of my wits by my own baby, and when I had teenagers who were becoming aware of the cruel and glorious world we live in.

The practice of the Consciousness Examen truly demonstrates, time and again, how God acts in my everyday life, not to mention the lives of my children, family, friends, colleagues, the Church and in the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Ignatian Spirituality is a mighty large tool kit to help us discover God and I, for one, am much the handier for its presence.



*Suzanne Geaney is the executive director of Ignatian Volunteer Corps, a service organization for retired men and women age 50 and older. A former Jesuit Volunteer from the late 1970s, Suzanne worked for the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus in Social Ministries and in Development before coming to IVC in 2003. For information about IVC, visit [www.ivc.org](http://www.ivc.org)*

### Praying the Jesuit Examen

#### THANKSGIVING

Lord, I realize that all, even myself, is a gift from you.  
*Today, for what things am I most grateful?*

#### INTENTION

Lord, open my eyes and ears to be more honest with myself.  
*Today, what do I really want for myself?*

#### EXAMINATION

Lord, show me what has been happening to me and in me this day.  
*Today, in what ways have I experienced your love?*

#### CONTRITION

Lord, I am still learning to grow in your love.  
*Today, what choices have been inadequate responses to your love?*

#### HOPE

Lord, let me look with longing toward the future.  
*Today, how will I let you lead me to a brighter tomorrow?*