



4. A SIMPLE EXAMEN for a COMPASSIONATE HEART

Preparation:

This *Examen*, based on that found in *Sleeping with Bread* (Paulist Press. 1995), may be practiced at any time.

You may wish to light a candle. Do whatever helps you to experience God's compassionate and unconditional love. Put your feet on the floor, take a few deep breaths and let the air fill you from your abdomen through your chest and through the rest of your body.

Breathe in that unconditional love, and when you breathe out fill the space around you with it. Make some gesture (e.g. Sign of the ✠ Cross) to begin and ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart so that you might recall the times when you had acted with compassion, or had not acted in this way. Then:

1. Place your hand on your heart and review the past 24 hours. Begin to replay' your day as you might watch a DVD. When did you express compassion for yourself, someone else or the world around you?

Notice how you acted with compassion. Breathe in the gratitude you feel and receive life again from that moment.

2. Now bring your attention to those moments when you did *not* express compassion for yourself, someone else or the world around you. When were you least able to accept, give or receive compassion?

Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Be with whatever you feel without trying to change or fix it in any way. You may wish to take deep breaths and let God's compassionate love fill you just as you are.

3. Give thanks for what you have experienced and rest in the gaze of God.
4. Conclude with these or similar words: *Glory to God, source of all Compassion, to the Heart of Jesus and the Spirit of Divine Love. Amen.*
4. Make any notes that will help you recall your experience of the *Examen*.