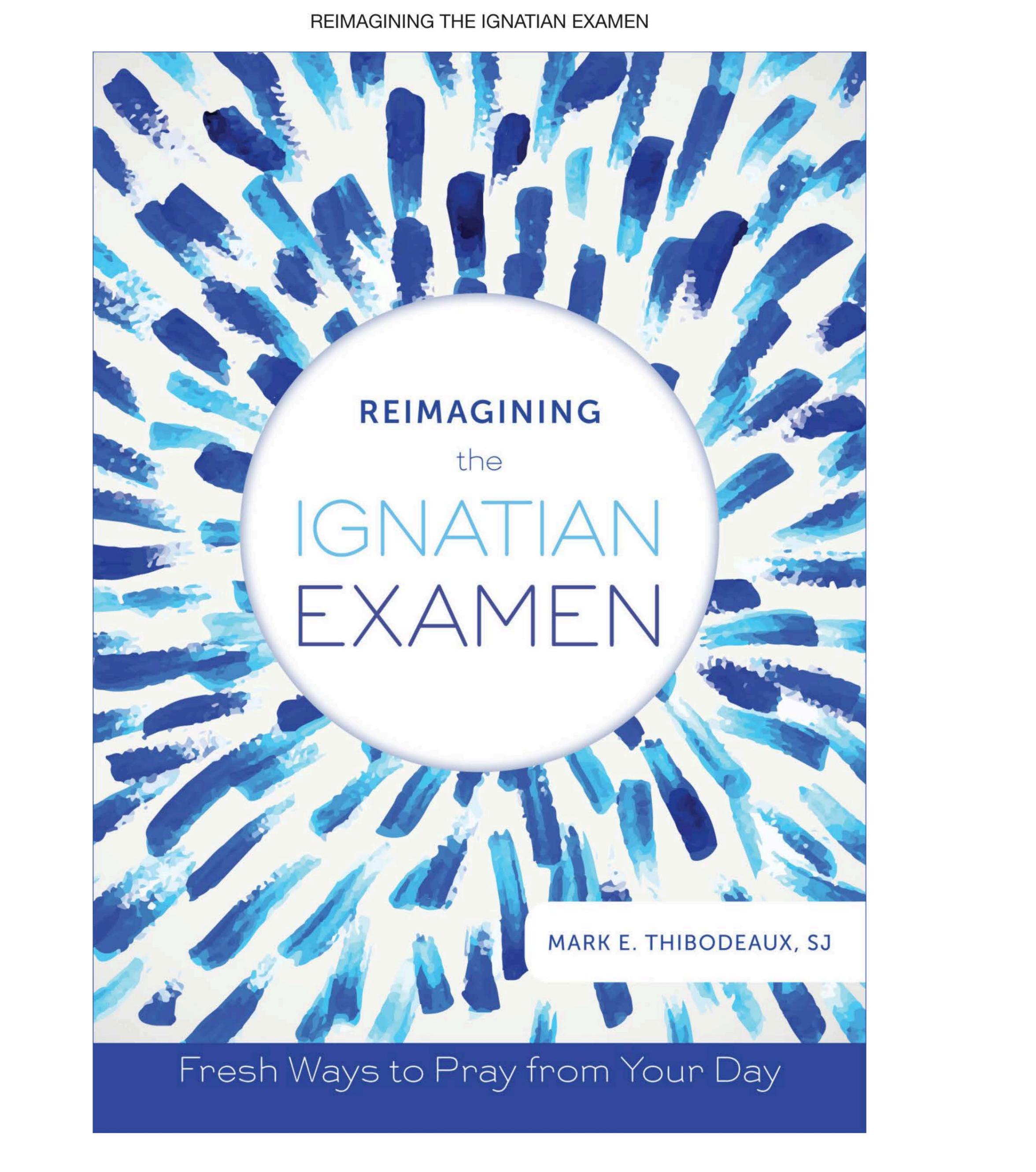


REIMAGINING THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN



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the
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Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day

Examen 28

Choose Life

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.

—Deuteronomy 30:11–19

1. I begin in my usual way.
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.
3. I slowly, prayerfully read the Bible passage above. Looking over my day, I ask myself, "Did I choose life or death today? Was the thrust of my life toward the good or toward the bad?" I do not analyze or dissect the parts of my day. Instead, I look at the overall movement of the day. Was it toward life or toward death? I speak with God about this. I give thanks and ask for forgiveness or for healing—whatever my heart feels inspired to say to God.
4. Now, I prayerfully imagine my day tomorrow, asking myself, "If I were to choose life tomorrow, what would my day look like? What would it *feel*

like?" Perhaps I'll get concrete here and imagine specific things I will do or say that will mean life for me tomorrow (I'll be nice to the neighbor; I'll take a walk at the end of the day; I'll give my spouse a big kiss when I get home). Or perhaps I'll simply pray about my interior disposition (I'll choose to live out of peace rather than anger; I'll choose not to let my worries get the best of me). I speak with God about what it means to choose life tomorrow.

5. If I feel called to do so, I'll make a commitment to God, asking him to help me be faithful to that commitment.
6. I end in my usual way.