

Gifts of the Day

Take a moment to center yourself and to open yourself to the presence of God.

You may want to light a candle, take a few deep breaths, or listen to prayerful music as a way to slow down and be present with God.

Ask the Spirit of God to cast light on your reflections as you review the events of the day just past.

1) Recall the particular gifts of the past 24 hours and jot down a word or a brief phrase.

Don't choose what you think you *ought* to be thankful for. Let the events and the people of the day scroll through your memory. Like a flashlight highlighting first one tiny section of a large mural and then another, let the Holy Spirit bring to your awareness specific blessings from this unique day: the bright red flash of a cardinal, laughter at the supper table, a soul-nourishing conversation with a friend, the spot-on wording of a poem, the tangy sweetness of a clementine, a worrisome meeting that went well, a good night's sleep.

2) Give thanks to God for the day and all its gifts. Rest in God's steadfast love.

Finding a regular time to do this can help you keep your commitment to a daily review. Traditionally it is done at the end of the day, but first thing in the morning or a lunch break can also be good times for looking over the previous 24 hours.

This practice can of course be done without any listing of the gifts, but I find that writing is a good way to receive these gifts more fully. One way to develop this practice as a daily habit is to make a pact with a friend to exchange lists by email for a time.

When we set aside a time to slow down, notice, and give thanks for the gifts of the day, we are taking a good step towards becoming more fully aware of God's presence in our everyday lives. If you are familiar with the prayer of awareness, or the consciousness examen, you may recognize this practice of glimpsing grace as the beginning of that fuller review of the day.