



Matthew 25: An Ignatian Examen

By Michael J. Graham, SJ

First Prelude: *I begin by recalling my gifts in the presence of God, those personal characteristics, abilities and aptitudes, the things that come easily to me that come to others difficult or not at all. I name as well those advantages I have, especially those into which I was born or which I was simply given, and especially the privileges that are mine. I recall as well that each of these gifts is not simply a thing God has given me, but a way in which God lives and dwells within me.*

Second Prelude: *I call to mind secondly the Great judgment scene in the 25th Chapter of Matthew's Gospel, reading from it slowly to savor it and recalling what Pope Francis has recently said regarding it: "If we seek the holiness pleasing to God's eyes, this text offers us one clear criterion on which we will be judged. 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was imprisoned and you visited me' (vv. 35-36)."*

First Recollection: *I review my day to identify the times where I have used what I have been given on behalf of another, whether it was the gift of something concrete, specific and tangible to someone in need of it, or whether it was perhaps somewhat more abstract - the time I spent, or the energy, trying to improve the situations and circumstances of others who I may never know. As it is possible, I remember specific faces and people and thank God for putting them in my path that I might be of use to them.*

Second Recollection: *I ask now for the grace to review my day to see those people to whom I did not extend myself, the opportunities that were before me to make a difference which I chose not to make, the places where I chose to hold too tightly to that which had been given me rather than give it away at the service of another - whether time or talent or treasure. As before, I seek to see specific faces, but now to beg their forgiveness before God.*

Final Reflection: *I once again thank God for all the deep gifts of my life and ask him to make me more diligent tomorrow in placing them freely for the use of God's Kingdom. I conclude with the Prayer for Generosity:
Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve. To give and not to count the cost. To fight and not to heed the wounds. To toil and not to seek for rest. To labor and to ask no reward, save that I know I do your holy will.*