GROUNDING
Settle into a comfortable space, take a few deep breaths, and close your eyes if that feels comfortable.

As you enter your examen prayer time, check in first with your body...

Do you feel any sensations in your body? What physical responses are you having as you breath deeply?

What feelings are present? Maybe sadness, anger, confusion, peace... Whatever feeling is there, welcome it as your teacher.

What might it tell you about yourself in this moment?

Take a few breaths to just notice what is present before you begin...

GRIEF
Hear these words from theologian and Freedom Fighter, Ruby Sales. She says, “Everywhere I go around the nation, I see and hear the hurt. And I ask people everywhere, ‘Tell me, where does it hurt?’ Do you see and feel the hurt that I see and feel? I feel and see the hurt in Black and Brown people who every day feel the vicious volley of racism and every day have their civil and human rights stripped away. And the people who do this use stereotypes and myths to justify doing it.”

This question - “where does it hurt?” - is one I want to pose to you.

Where do you feel the hurt when you think about what you have heard, seen, or experienced as it relates to racism and white supremacy in this season? Maybe something has personally impacted you and caused you pain. Maybe you are processing the latest news story or the latest injustice caught on camera. Or maybe you had a subtle but unsettling conversation about race.

Take a minute to let any sadness come to the surface for you. Some feelings may come flooding to the surface and other may feel a little numb. That’s all okay.

Take a few minutes of silence.
GRATITUDE
Next, I will invite you to consider what you are grateful for in this season.

What are you grateful for in your own life that has aided you in your journey of awareness and wrestling? Has there been an experience, conversation, that you can point to with gratitude? Perhaps it’s a person, the strength of your ancestors, or an exchange that you feel thankful for?

What gifts can you recognize in this season? Maybe it is safety and protection for your loved ones. Maybe this season has opened up new ways of understanding racial pain that you didn’t understand before. Maybe you are grateful for the new collective conscious that has awakened to the realities faced by marginalized people and people of color.

GRACE
What might God be trying to say to you through your grief and gratitude related to racial injustices?

Where can you see God at work in your own spirit and soul? Have there been places of inspiration, deeper awareness and understanding that you can point to as gifts from God?

Has there been healing or strength that you have received to continue to navigate the weight of racism and/or work for justice?

What grace do you need to ask God for as it relates to your personal journey around racism?

GRIT
Now let’s consider grit. This allows us to consider how we might be “contemplatives in action” addressing issues of racism, cultures of white supremacy and systemic injustice.

When you think about the realities of racial injustice, where are you being inviting to go deeper?

Where are the tender places that you are being invited to lean more into to help imagine and work towards a reality where the Beloved Community exists?

Being reminded that “love does not come of emptiness, but is full of reality” (Thomas Merton), pause and ask God what reality you might be invited to see or to hold.

Close this examen prayer time by coming back into the grounding of your breath. Spend some time journaling anything that came up for you as you reflected.

Originally written by Leonetta Elaiho for “Gratitude, Grief, Grace and Grit,” a program of the Ignatian Spirituality Center, Seattle | October 20, 2020