

Examination of Conscience

I. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.

- A. Have I valued any finite thing or reality above and beyond my relationship with God, such as wealth, pleasure, or power? Have I made my career, my family, specific material goods, or even another person my highest priority?
- B. Have I reduced God to a thing that I seek to manipulate or control? Do I put God to the test or try to fit Him into my own pre-conceived notions about what He should be or do for me?
- C. Have I participated in "superstitious practices," such as astrology, magic, fortune-telling, or anything that attributes divinity to an object or idea that is not God?

II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- A. Have I treated sacred or holy things with contempt or indifference? Do I give proper and due reverence to God by respecting His name, His Word and Church, and his creation as a whole?
- B. Have I taken false oaths or offered empty promises? Do I needlessly swear in the name of God?
- C. Have I reduced the dignity of the name of God or of the saints by using their names in a profane or demeaning way?

III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- A. Have I attended Mass on Sundays and Holy days? Have I made an honest attempt to be truly present in the celebration, offering it my full attention and reverence?
- B. Have I respected the Sabbath by dedicating time for the renewal of mind, body and soul? Have I sought to commune with God in prayer and participate in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?
- C. Have I willfully engaged in activities that deprive others of the opportunity to worship the Lord? Have I carelessly participated in unnecessary commerce or work?

IV. Honor your father and mother.

- A. Have I contributed to the well being (physical, spiritual, and psychological) of my parents and the other members of my family?
- B. Have I respected legitimate authority (family, civil, religious, and vocational) and sought to contribute to the common good?
- C. Have I been just and honest in terms of my personal roles and responsibilities?

V. You shall not kill.

- A. Have I done violence to others (bodily, spiritually, or psychologically) by participating in physical or emotional brutality or consciously leading others toward sin and falsehood?
- B. Have I damaged the reputation or livelihood of another person through gossip or false accusation?

- C. Have I willfully disregarded the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death by using contraceptives and abortifacients, procuring or assisting in an abortion, or supporting the administration of euthanasia procedures?

VI. You shall not commit adultery.

- A. Have I lived with an attitude of reverence and respect for the Sacrament of Marriage, especially the promise of fidelity to one's spouse? Do I seek to love and honor my spouse (or future spouse) as Christ loves the Church?
- B. Have I sought sexual gratification outside of the Sacrament of Marriage through sexual infidelity, pre-marital sexual relations, or self-gratification?
- C. Have I demeaned the marriage covenant through the lustful objectification of an individual for my pleasure, including pornographic habits?

VII. You shall not steal.

- A. Have I deliberately taken another person's property?
- B. Have I refused to compensate another person for a loss that was caused by my intentional neglect or carelessness?
- C. Have I fairly and rightly compensated others for goods or services that I have received?

VIII. You shall not bear false witnesses against your neighbor.

- A. Have I lied or withheld the truth in order to serve my own personal gain?
- B. Have I misrepresented the character or reputation of another person?
- C. Have I intentionally led others to believe something about the Church's teaching or practices that were simply not true?

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- A. Have I willfully objectified another person as a means toward my own sexual gratification?
- B. Have I sought sexual relations with someone who was married or who was outside of my own marital covenant (or future marital covenant)?
- C. Have I sought emotional intimacy with another person in such a way that endangers my own or the other person's marital commitment?

X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

- A. Have I allowed the meaning and purpose of my life to be dominated by the pursuit and attainment of material goods?
- B. Have I been pre-occupied with envy of another person's success? Have I taken pleasure in the misfortune of others?
- C. Have I lived with a disposition of gratitude to God for the goods and blessings I have received?

Begin your confession with the sign of the cross, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. My last confession was _____ weeks (months, years) ago."

Sins...

The priest may read a passage from holy Scripture.

Say the sins that you remember. Start with the one(s) that is most difficult to say. (In order to make a good confession the faithful must confess all mortal sins, according to kind and number.) After confessing all the sins you remember since your last good confession, you may conclude by saying,

"I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life."

Listen to the words of the priest. He will assign you some penance. Doing the penance will diminish the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. When invited, express some prayer of sorrow or Act of Contrition such as:

An Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because I have offended you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.