

Examination of Conscience

This Examination of Conscience focuses on our three basic relationships - with God, our neighbor and ourselves. It can make our confession (penance, reconciliation) more meaningful for our lives and relationships.

If you make good use and frequent use of this Sacrament, you will have peace of heart, purity of conscience and a deep union with Christ in His love for His Father and for all men and women.

Think about the Commandments and Questions below, they ask us more than WHAT and HOW OFTEN. They can put us on the track of asking WHY and WHAT DIRECTION. Often, much more important questions!

The grace of this Sacrament will cause you to become like Jesus, our Lord, in all you say and do! Start by praying to the Holy Spirit, asking for help in making a good examination to prepare for Confession.

Prayer Before Confession

Come, O Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind that I may clearly know my sins, move my heart that I may be truly sorry for them, sincerely confess them, and amend my life. Amen.

A Practical Model

Commandments:

1. "I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me."
2. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain."
3. "Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath Day."

My Life With God - Ask Yourself:

- To what extent do I allow other persons and things in my life to become more important than God? This is the sin of idolatry.
- How often does "God" appear on my appointment calendar? There are ninety-six 15-minute periods in each day. Does God receive my attention for even one of these periods?
- There are 52 Sundays each year. How many of these days find me at Mass?
- How much of an effort do I make to receive the Sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist?
- Do I make use of retreats, seminars, classes, spiritual books, magazines, and tapes to deepen my relationship with God?
- Do I deny God before those with whom I come in contact by being fearful and ashamed to talk about Him in my daily conversation?
- Are other people drawn to God because of the life I lead? Or is my life a source of scandal and contradiction to those whose faith is weak?
- What is the quality of my trust in God, especially in times of worry and fear? Have I reduced God to the "Good Guy upstairs" whom I only call on in times of need? Do I merely give attention to God so that I can make it in the next life?
- Do I continue to pray even when God seems slow to answer?
- Do I spend more time on my own amusement and entertainment than on my spiritual life?

Commandments:

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| 4. "Honor your father and your mother." | 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." |
| 5. "You shall not kill." | 9. "You shall not desire your neighbor's wife." |
| 6. "You shall not commit adultery." | 10. "You shall not desire your neighbor's goods." |
| 7. "You shall not steal." | |

My Life With Others – Ask Yourself:

- God's priorities for the Christian's life are: God, spouse, family, work. To what extent is my life faithful to God's priorities?
- How much time and effort are given to deepening my relationship with my spouse?
- How much time and effort are given to building a healthy relationship with my children?
- What efforts are made to develop a spirit of prayer in my family?
- Am I kind to others outside my home, and miserable with the members of my family?
- Am I a caring relative and neighbor in word and deed? Do I build myself up by tearing down others?
- At work, do I perform an honest day's labor? Do I speak the truth?
- If in a position of authority, do I use my position for my own advantage, or for the good of others?
- Do I respect, defend and promote the dignity of all human life?
- Do I degrade or misuse the gift of sexuality (as taught by the Church) in thought, word, or deed?
- Do I support the pornography industry by purchasing or reading their magazines or viewing their movies and videos?
- What is my attitude toward people who are different from me in race, color or social position?
- Do I thank God for material blessings by sharing them with my Church and community, and with the poor and the needy?
- Do I overspend and overeat while millions of people live in poverty and die of hunger?
- Do I freely give and receive forgiveness from others? Do I harbor grudges and resentment?

My Life With Myself – Ask Yourself:

- How open and receptive am I to the love that comes to me from God and others?
- Do I make a reasonable effort to develop the talents that God has given to me?
- Have I adopted a perfectionistic attitude toward life and thereby lost my ability to be gentle and forgiving toward myself?
- Do I mistreat my own body through the improper use of food, alcohol, drugs and sex?
- Do I understand that my attachment to sin is the only thing that keeps God's peace at a distance?
- Where is my treasure? Am I seeking power and wealth for myself? Am I storing up treasure in heaven?

Act of Contrition

O my God,

I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen