An Examination of Conscience

First Commandment
“Taste the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.” (Ex. 20:2-3)
- Did I give God time in prayer each day?
- Do I educate myself on and accept all of God’s teachings, or just the convenient parts?
- Did I despair of or presume God’s mercy?
- Have I engaged in occult practices, such as fortune telling, “Ouija” boards, etc.?
- Do I have false gods: money, work, sports, video games, TV, drugs, fame, pleasure, etc.?

Second Commandment
“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.” (Ex. 20:7)
- Did I insult God or choose to get angry with Him?
- Did I take God’s name in vain carelessly or uselessly?
- Do I allow people to mock Christ’s Bride, the Church, or sacred things?

Third Commandment
“Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath Day.” (Ex. 20:8)
- Did I miss a Sunday Mass or Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- Did I fail to participate fully at Mass by coming late or leaving early?
- Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a family day?
- Did I show reverence for the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist?

Fourth Commandment
“Honor your father and your mother.” (Ex. 20:12)
- Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or authority figures?
- Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?
- Did I cause tension or fights in my family?
- Have I cared for elderly or sick relatives?

Fifth Commandment
“You shall not kill.” (Ex. 20:13)
- Have I physically injured anyone or myself?
- Have I neglected my body by use of drugs and alcohol?
- Did I have an abortion or advise someone else to do so?
- Did I attempt suicide or self-mutilation?
- Did I get angry or impatient with someone, or bully them?
- Did I put others at risk by drunk driving, texting while driving, or by excessive speed?

Sixth and Ninth Commandments
“You shall not commit adultery.” (Ex. 20:14) “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.” (Ex. 20:17)
- Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or use suggestive stories?
- Did I deliberately look at pornographic images?
- Did I masturbate?
- Have I had sex outside of marriage?
- Did I commit impure acts with another person of the same or opposite sex?
- Have I used contraception?
- Have I thought of others as objects?
- Have I dressed immodestly?

Seventh and Tenth Commandments
“You shall not steal.” (Ex. 20:15) “You shall not covet your neighbors’ goods.” (Ex. 20:17)
- Did I steal, cheat, or encourage others to do so?
- Have I made up for stolen goods?
- Have I wasted time at work, school or home?
- Have I envied another’s family, appearance, abilities, popularity, or possessions?
- Have I made material possessions the purpose of my life?

Eighth Commandment
“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” (Ex. 20:16)
- Have I lied or gossiped?
- Have I deliberately deceived others?
- Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?
- Have I slandered another’s reputation, either in conversation, texts, or social media?

Other Sins
- Did I receive Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin, or without fasting for one hour from food and drink (water and medicine permitted)?
- Did I willfully make an incomplete confession during Reconciliation?
- Did I fail to perform the penance from a previous Reconciliation?
- Did I fail to fast on Ash Wednesday or Good Friday?
- Did I eat meat on Ash Wednesday or the Fridays of Lent?
When he finishes, say the Act of Contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart, in choosing to do wrong and failing to do good. I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

Make the sign of the cross while Father absolves you: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

You say: "Amen.

Father may say: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good." You say, "His mercy endures forever." Father may conclude by saying, "Go in peace." You say, "Thanks be to God."

Turning from Vice to Virtue

In examining what sins are a particular challenge for you, ask for God’s grace to grow in the opposing virtues. Vice is conquered when we commit ourselves to cultivate habits of goodness, expressed by each of the virtues.

How to Go to Confession

1. Make the sign of the cross with Father: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
2. Say: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was (name approximate time). These are my sins:”
3. Say your sins and their frequency to the priest.
4. Listen to the priest as he gives you your penance.

6 Steps for a Good Confession

1. Examine your conscience. What sins have you committed since your last good confession?
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins to the priest.
4. Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of them.
5. After your confession, do the penance the priest gives you.
6. Pray daily to avoid sin, especially sins you have previously committed.

A Practical Guide for Confession

1. Pride          Humility
2. Greed          Generosity
3. Lust           Chastity
4. Anger          Patience
5. Gluttony       Temperance
6. Envy           Kindness
7. Sloth          Diligence