

Examination of Conscience *for Confession*

"To those who have been far away from the sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love, I make this appeal: Come back to this source of grace; do not be afraid! Christ himself is waiting for you. He will heal you, and you will be at peace with God!" — Pope St. John Paul II

The basic requirement for a good Confession is to have the intention of returning to God like the Prodigal son and of acknowledging our sins with true sorrow before his representative, the priest.

Examine your conscience. Recall your sins. Calmly ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's Commandments.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

Recite: Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed

Come, O Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray. O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant that, by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God, and give Him thanks for all the benefits which we have received from Him, particularly this day.

O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art here present, and plainly seest me, and that Thou observest all my actions, all my thoughts, and the most secret motions of my heart. Thou watchest over me with an incomparable love, every moment bestowing favors, and preserving me from evil. Blessed be Thy Holy Name; and may all creatures bless Thy goodness for the benefits which I have ever received from Thee, and particularly this day. May the saints and angles supply my defect in rendering Thee due thanks. Never permit me to be so base and wicked as to repay Thy bounties with ingratitude and Thy blessings with offences and injuries.

Let us ask of our Lord Jesus Christ grace to discover the sins which we have committed this day, and beg of Him a true sorrow for them, and a sincere repentance.

O my Lord Jesus Christ, Judge of the living and the dead, before whom I must appear one day to give an exact account of my whole life; enlighten me, I beseech Thee, and give me an humble and contrite heart, that I may see wherein I have offended Thine infinite Majesty, and judge myself now with such a just severity, that then Thou mayest judge me with mercy and clemency.

Let us here examine what sins we have committed this day, by thought, word, deed or omission...

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- Have I performed my duties toward God reluctantly or grudgingly?
- Did I neglect my prayer life? Did I recite my usual prayers?
- Did I receive holy Communion in the state of mortal sin or without the necessary preparation?
- Did I violate the one-hour Eucharistic fast?
- Did I fail to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?
- Did I seriously believe in something superstitious or engage in a superstitious practice (palm-reading or fortune telling for instance)?
- Did I seriously doubt a matter of Faith?
- Did I put my faith in danger-without a good reason-by reading a book, pamphlet, or magazine that contains material contrary to Catholic faith or morals?
- Did I endanger my faith by joining or attending meetings of organizations opposed to the Catholic faith (non-catholic services, the Communist Party, Freemasonry, “new age” cults, or other religions)? Did I take part in one of its activities?
- Have I committed the sin of sacrilege (profanation of a sacred person, place or thing)?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

- Did I fail to try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions that I made to God?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I make use of God’s name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- Did I make use of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s name or another saint’s name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- Have I been a sponsor in Baptism or participate actively in other ceremonies outside the Catholic Church?
- Did I tell a lie under oath?
- Did I break (private or public) vows?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

- Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation?
- Did I fail to dress appropriately for Mass?

- Did I, without sufficient reason, arrived at Mass so late that I failed to fulfill the Sunday or holy day of obligation?
- Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass, by not paying attention, looking around out of curiosity, etc.?
- Did I cause another to be distracted?
- Have I performed any work or business activity that would inhibit the worship due to God, the joy proper to the Lord's day, or the appropriate relaxation of mind and body, on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation?
- Did I fail to generously help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?
- Did I fail to fast or abstain on a day prescribed by the Church?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

(For Parents)

- Have I neglected to teach my children their prayers, send them to church, or give them a Christian education?
- Have I given them bad example?
- Have I neglected to watch over my children, to monitor their companions, the books they read, the movies and TV shows they watch?
- Have I failed to see to it that my child made the First Confession and First Communion?
- Have I failed to see to it that my children have received the sacrament of Confirmation?

(For Children)

- Was I disobedient toward my parents?
- Did I neglect to help my parents when my help was needed?
- Did I treat my parents with little affection or respect?
- Did I react proudly when I was corrected by my parents?
- Did I have a disordered desire for independence?
- Did I do my chores?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- Did I easily get angry or lose my temper?
- Was I envious or jealous of others?
- Did I injure or take the life of anyone? Was I ever reckless in driving?
- Was I an occasion of sin for others by way of conversation, the telling of jokes religiously, racially, or sexually offensive, my way of dressing, inviting somebody to attend certain shows, lending harmful books or magazines, helping someone to steal, etc.? Did I try to repair the scandal done?
- How many persons did I lead to sin? What sin or sins were involved?

- Did I neglect my health? Did I attempt to take my life?
- Have I mutilated myself or another?
- Did I get drunk or use prohibited drugs?
- Did I eat or drink more than a sufficient amount, allowing myself to get carried away by gluttony?
- Did I participate in any form of physical violence?
- Did I consent to or actively take part in direct sterilization (tubal ligation, vasectomy, etc.)? Do I realize that this will have a permanent effect on my married life and that I will have to answer to God for its consequences?
- Did I consent to, advise, or actively take part in an abortion? Was I aware that the Church punishes with automatic excommunication (*latae sententiæ*) those who procure and achieve abortion? Do I realize that this is a very grave crime?
- Did I cause harm to anyone with my words or actions?
- Did I desire revenge or harbor enmity, hatred, or ill-feelings when someone offended me?
- Did I ask pardon whenever I offended anyone?
- Did I insult or offensively tease others?
- Did I quarrel with one of my brothers or sisters?

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

- Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts?
- Did I consent to evil desires against the virtue of purity, even though I may not have carried them out? Were there any circumstances that aggravated the sin: affinity (relationship by marriage), consanguinity (blood relationship), either the married state or the consecration to God of a person involved?
- Did I engage in impure conversations? Did I start them?
- Did I look for fun in forms of entertainment that placed me in proximate occasions of sin, such as certain dances, movies, shows, or books with immoral contents? Did I frequent houses of ill-repute or keep bad company?
- Did I realize that I might already have been committing a sin by placing myself in a proximate occasion of sin, such as sharing a room with a person I find sexually attractive, or being alone with such a person in circumstances that could lead to sin?
- Did I fail to take care of those details of modesty and decency that are the safeguards of purity?
- Did I fail, before going to a show or reading a book, to find out its moral implications, so as not to put myself in immediate danger of sinning and in order to avoid distorting my conscience?
- Did I willfully look at an indecent picture or cast an immodest look upon myself or another? Did I willfully desire to commit such a sin?
- Did I lead others to sins of impurity or immodesty? What sins?

- Did I commit an impure act? By myself, through masturbation (which is grave matter)? With someone else? How many times? With someone of the same or opposite sex? Was there any circumstance of relationship (such as affinity) that could have given the sin special gravity? Did this illicit relationship result in pregnancy? Did I do anything to prevent or end that pregnancy?
- Do I have friendships that are habitual occasions of sexual sins? Am I prepared to end them?
- In courtship, is true love my fundamental reason for wanting to be with the other person? Do I live the constant and cheerful sacrifice of not putting the person I love in danger of sinning? Do I degrade human love by confusing it with selfishness or mere pleasure?
- Did I engage in acts such as “petting,” “necking,” passionate kisses, or prolonged embraces

(On abortion, contraception, sterilization, etc., see also The Fifth Commandment).

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

- Did I steal? How much money? Or how much was the object worth? Did I give it back, or at least have the intention of doing so?
- Have I done or caused damage to another person’s property? To what extent?
- Did I harm anyone by deception, fraud, or coercion in business contracts or transactions?
- Did I unnecessarily spend beyond my means? Do I spend too much money because of vanity, or caprice?
- Do I give alms according to my capacity?
- Was I envious of my neighbor’s goods?
- Did I neglect to pay my debts?
- Did I knowingly accept stolen goods?
- Did I desire to steal?
- Did I give in to laziness or love of comfort rather than diligently work or study?
- Was I greedy? Do I have an excessively materialistic view of life?

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

- Did I tell lies? Did I repair any damage that may have resulted as a consequence of this?
- Have I unjustly or rashly accused others?
- Did I sin by detraction, that is, by telling the faults of another person without necessity?
- Did I sin by calumny, that is, by telling derogatory lies about another person?
- Did I engage in gossip, backbiting, or tale telling?
- Did I reveal a secret without due cause?

IN RELATION TO GOD

- Love of God above all things
- Neglect or omission in the discharge of one's religious duties
- Irreverence in church
- Keeping Sunday holy
- Want of respect for holy persons and things
- Doubts as to any article of faith
- Worldly fear
- Blasphemy
- Murmuring
- Lack of hope or resignation
- Resistance to grace

IN RELATION TO YOUR NEIGHBOR:

- Love of one's neighbor for God's sake
- Want of consideration
- Lack of obedience
- Obstinacy
- Hardheartedness
- Contumely
- Lack of charity
- Hatred
- Jealousy
- Injurious words or actions
- Forgiveness of injury
- Jeers
- Calumny
- Backbiting
- False testimony
- Violence
- Lying
- Bad example
- Incitement to sin
- Scandal
- Injustice
- Injury to reputation or goods
- Debt
- Theft
- Duty to one's country

IN RELATION TO YOURSELF:

- Self-sanctification
- Eradication of one's chief defect
- Practice of one's chief virtue
- Simplicity
- Generosity
- Pride
- Vanity
- Greed
- Sensuality in one's thoughts, looks, reading, conversation, actions
- Intemperance
- Gluttony
- Sloth
- Neglect of mortification
- Anger
- Impatience

If nothing occurs to your mind in which you have caused offence, renew your sorrow for the sins of your past life. Let us conceive a great sorrow for having offended God.

O my God, I detest these and all other sins which I have committed against Thy divine Majesty. I am extremely sorry that I have offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good, and sin displeaseth Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart; and firmly purpose, by the help of Thy grace, never more to offend Thee. I resolve to avoid the occasions of sin; I will confess my sins, and will endeavor to make satisfaction for them. Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy, and pardon me, a wretched sinner. In the name of Thy beloved Son Jesus, I humbly beg of Thee so to wash me with His precious Blood, that my sins may be entirely remitted.

Let us endeavor, as far as possible, to put ourselves in the disposition in which we desire to be found at the hour of death.

O my God, I accept death as a homage and adoration which I owe to Thy divine Majesty, and as a punishment justly due to my sins, in union with the death of my dear Redeemer, and as the only means of coming to Thee, my beginning and last end.

I firmly believe all the sacred truths which the Catholic Church believeth and teacheth, because Thou hast revealed them. And by the assistance of Thy holy grace, I am resolved to live and die in the communion of this Thy Church.

Relying upon Thy goodness, power, and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, and life everlasting, through the merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ, my only Redeemer, and by the intercession of His blessed Mother and all the Saints.

I love Thee with all my heart and soul, and desire to love Thee as the blessed do in heaven. I adore all the designs of Thy divine providence, resigning myself entirely to Thy will.

I also love my neighbor for Thy sake, as I love myself. I sincerely forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

I renounce the devil, with all his works; the world, with all its pomps; the flesh, with all its temptations.

I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

Father, into Thy hands, I commend my spirit.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and all the saints, pray for us to our Lord, that we may be preserved from sin and all evils. Amen.

Blessed St. Michael, defend us in the day of battle, that we may not be lost at the dreadful judgment. Amen.

O my good Angel, whom God by His divine mercy hath appointed to be my guardian, enlighten and protect me, direct and govern me. Amen.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of all our sins. AMEN.

Sources:

From the Handbook of Prayers, edited by Fr. Jim Socias

From the St. Andrew Daily Missal