

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Prayer Before the Examination of Conscience

Lord Jesus, thank You for the many graces and blessings You have given to me. Move my heart and mind, Lord, so that upon sincere reflection of my words and actions I may know how I have offended You this day. I ask for the fortitude to be faithful to Your will so that my heart might be changed and Your love might never be offended again. Through thoughtful meditation, may I recognize my weaknesses and truly understand Your guiding Love in my life. You are the lasting happiness I seek. Holy Mary, Mother of faith, pray for me. Amen.

Examination of Conscience

Each area of my life should be considered: my apostolate, my family, my friends, my roommates, my work, my prayer, etc.

Note: This examination groups sins according to the capital sins, the seven deadly sins from which other sins typically flow. However, the same material act may be sinful for different motives; therefore every person needs to apply this to himself carefully. I.e. An act of lying is wrong, but it might be motivated by the capital sin of vanity (to make you look good), or from the capital sin of sloth/laziness (to avoid work), or from envy (to damage the reputation of another), or from a mixture of all three.

Pride

Have I refused to admit my own weakness? Have I sought things beyond me?

Have I dwelt on the failings of others? Have I judged others? Ranked myself better than others? In thought, word, or deed? Have I hated others? Have I refused to learn from others?

Have I been stubborn? Refused to admit I was wrong? Refused to accept that another person had a better idea? Have I been arrogant? Have I held others in contempt? Have I failed to show respect to those in authority? (parents, priests, etc.) Have I failed to do my duties?

How have I manifested my concern for others? Have I been forgiving and tolerant of them? Have I scandalized them by bad example?

Have I neglected to use the talents that God has given me out of false-humility?

Vanity:

Have I acted/joked/given talks more to impress others than to do God's will or to help others?

Has my humor and conversation been self-seeking? Have my jokes been unkind?

Have I listened to others? Have I lied or exaggerated to make myself look good?

Is my physical exercise motivated by vanity or by health? *Ambition*-have I sought recognition and advancement for my own glory, rather than to do God's will?

Have I been content with my lowly position, or have I resented the role that Christ is asking me to fulfill?

Lust

Custody of Eyes:

Have I looked at others impurely? With what frequency? Has this led to impure thoughts? What frequency and duration? Have I viewed other people as mere sexual objects rather than as persons to be loved?

Pornography: Have I used the internet, or TV?

Have I flirted/danced impurely/toyed with the feelings of another?

Impure thoughts: Have I entertained impure thoughts? Briefly or at length? With what frequency? On what occasions?

Impure acts: Alone, or with another? Impure touches with boy/girlfriend? Impurity in hugs with others?

Words: Have my jokes, conversations, and flattery been pure? Have I listened to impure jokes, tolerated foul conversation?

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Have I encouraged/approved/aided the unchaste acts of others? Have I failed to witness to Christ's teachings about holy purity?

Have I received Holy Communion while in a state of serious sin?

Have I neglected to seek Confession before Holy Communion?

Modesty: Has my dress been an occasion of sin for others?

Have I sought to flatter myself by drawing improper attention to certain aspects of my beauty?

Play: Have I been guilty of an excess or deficiency in resting myself in play?

Have I refused to express mirth at another's humor?

Thoughtlessness: Have I properly considered my actions? Have I applied the standards of Christ to them?

Anger/Wrath

Have I harbored resentment and hatred in my thoughts? Have I imagined bad conversations to nurture my anger? Have I judged rashly? Have I plotted revenge? Have I sought to be a peace-maker? Have I been physically violent? Have I refused or been slow or ungracious in forgiving?

Have I insulted people? Quarreled with people? Lost my temper?

Impatience: How have I carried my cross? Have I been impatient with people, events, sufferings, sicknesses?

Covetousness/Avarice

Have I desired or lived a lifestyle beyond my means of a Christian? Have I been resentful of my lack of money? Have I neglected to tithe? Have I trusted God will provide for me?

Have I cheated, stolen, or failed to pay my bills on time? Have I borrowed without permission?

Have I been honest in my dealings with others? Have I used people for my own ends and advantage? Have I wasted money on unnecessary expenses or gambling?

Have I spent money on the less fortunate and the poor? Have I given with a cheerful heart?

Have I paid my taxes honestly?

Have I failed to keep secrets?

Have I taken part in or committed various other sins against justice: Murder, Theft, Cheating, Contempt for others, Backbiting, Tale-bearing, Derision, Cursing, Boasting, Flattery, Quarrelling?

Envy

Have I envied or been jealous of the abilities, talents, ideas, plans, good-looks, intelligence, clothes, car, possessions, friends etc. of another person?

Have I damaged the reputation of another? By deeds/looks/words have I caused others to have lower opinion of someone else?

Slander: Have I exaggerated/lied about the faults of others? Have I repeated accusations that might not be true?

Gossip: Have I led others to gossip? Have I neglected to change the conversation/avoid conversation with others who are gossiping? Have I failed to defend the reputation of others?

Thoughts: Have I mentally judged others? I.e. internal detraction/slander/gossip of the mind.

Have I borne hatred of another?

Have I been guilty of deception?

Do I despise others of different race, class or culture?

Lies: Have I told lies of envy (to damage another's reputation), laziness (to avoid work), or vanity (to make me look good)?

Sloth/Apathy

Have I sought God above all else, or have I put other priorities (i.e. friendships) ahead of Him?

Have I got so caught up in the things of this world that I have forgotten God?

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Have I risked losing my faith by bad company, bad reading, cowardice, pride?

Have I trusted God, especially in times of difficulty?

Have I kept the Lord's Day holy?

Have I worked needlessly on Sunday?

Have I omitted some part of my plan of life: daily Mass, daily Holy Hour, mental prayer, Rosary, reading etc.?

Have I received Holy Communion reverently?

Have I made a due preparation before Mass begins?

Have I made an appropriate thanksgiving after Mass?

Have I entertained distraction in prayer, or failed to give God due concentration in prayer, or rushed my Rosary?

(Note: Not giving God the **effort** he deserves in prayer is not the same thing as involuntary weakness in mental distractions.)

Have I fallen asleep in prayer due to lack of effort and discipline in getting to sleep on time?

Have I sinned against God by taking his name in vain?

Have I caused scandal to others by using foul language?

Have I given scandal by setting a bad example to others by my sloth?

Has my behavior or words led others to sin?

Have I witnessed to Christ and his teachings?

Laziness: Have I neglected the duties of my apostolate?

Have I been negligent/sloppy/half-hearted in my apostolate?

Have I procrastinated (i.e. with email), avoiding more serious priorities?

Have I wasted time watching useless TV, or in pointless internet surfing?

Am I just, hardworking and honest in my work?

Words: Has my conversation been focused on my own pleasure, or on others?

Punctuality: Have I sinned against my neighbor by being late for meetings? Have I wasted other people's time by being late or unprepared? Have I sinned against God by being late for Mass?

Gluttony

Have I eaten more than I need? To how serious an extent?

Have I sought food with undue concentration?

Have I eaten with undue haste and lack of consideration of others?

Have I neglected the food needs of others at the table or of my roommate?

Have I spent undue amounts of money on food?

Have I practiced fasting and self-denial, especially on Fridays and other fast days?

Have I fasted before receiving Holy Communion at Mass?

Is my heart set on pleasure and amusement?

Drunkenness:

Have I drunk alcohol to excess? Repeatedly?

Have I made suitable *plans* in the quantity of alcohol that I consume?

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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.