

Examination of Conscience *(for personal reflection)*

My Relationship to God

"You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart."

Is my whole life directed toward loving God and seeking his Kingdom and plan for humanity? Or are personal greed and the things of this world my basic object of devotion? Have I elevated things like money, status, or superstition to the level of false gods?

Do I pray sufficiently each day and seek to have a continuous spirit of prayer? Do I listen with an open and humble heart? Do I praise and thank God for his gifts? Do I use God's name in vain?

Have I missed Mass through my own fault on Sundays or holy days? Do I participate fully in the Mass from beginning to end and in the whole sacramental life of the church? Do I bring my children to Mass and provide them with religious education?

Do I take steps to deepen and increase my understanding of the faith? Do I profess and live it courageously?

My Relationship to Others

"Love one another as I have loved you."

Do I truly love my neighbors – as myself? Do I aid or obstruct their progress toward God and fuller life? Have I used or exploited others for my own selfish interests?

Am I caring toward my family? Do I show fidelity, patience, reverence and love to my spouse, children, parents, brothers, sisters? Have I shown good example? Have I failed to spend time with my family and thought only of myself?

Do I obey legitimate authority? Do I exercise leadership and authority in a spirit of Christian service?

Have I hated others, shown prejudice or discrimination toward them? Have I upheld and protected the right to life at all levels? Have I permitted or encouraged an abortion? Have I disregarded the human dignity of the aged, the mentally or physically handicapped, the mentally ill? Am I violent? Have I physically or mentally abused anyone? Do I strive to reduce violence around me?

Have my relations to others been faithful and chaste? Have I sexually exploited or demeaned another? Am I guilty of such violations of chastity as adultery, premarital sex, lust, or conversation that is indecent or cheapens human dignity? Have I been unfaithful to my spouse by becoming attached or intimate with someone else?

Have I stolen or damaged the property of others? Do I pay my debts? Have I worked honestly, upheld contracts, paid fair wages? Do I waste money on myself and deprive others who depend on me? Do I share what God has given me with those in need?

Do I deal honestly and truthfully with others? Have I gossiped or talked about others behind their backs? Have I revealed things that should have been kept confidential? Am I critical of others? Do I welcome strangers, especially in my neighborhood and at church?

Am I greedy? Am I envious of what others have?

Do I bring the good news of the gospel to others? Do I promote Christian values and the life of the Church? Do I try to heal the wounds of the Church or do I inflame them?

Do I work for the betterment of human society? Do I try to be informed about social and political issues that affect the common good? According to my role in life, do I seek to eliminate from the world whatever keeps my brothers and sisters from the full human development intended by their creator: poverty, disease, hunger, injustice, oppressive laws and structures, unequal distribution of world resources?

My Personal Growth in Christ

"Be perfect as your Father is perfect."

Is Christ and his way of living the basic goal of my life? What inclinations and attitudes within me are hindrances to my growth and development as God's son or daughter? Do I work on controlling dangerous attitudes like pride, arrogance, jealousy, greed, lust, intemperance, self-sufficiency, prejudice? Do I make full use of my talents and gifts?

Do I try to keep a cheerful, positive disposition? Do I put myself down? Have I let fear prevent me from following my conscience? Do I take care of my health? Overeat, over-drink, take harmful drugs? Am I dependent on alcohol, drugs, or gambling? If so, what am I doing about it?

Do I have a wholesome attitude toward my own sexuality? Have I willfully indulged in thoughts, actions, reading, entertainment that are contrary to the dignity and proper meaning of sex?

Do I take time for my spiritual growth? Am I open to change and the call to fuller life prompted by God's Spirit in my heart?

How to Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Beforehand: Pray and think about what you want to tell the priest.

Then go to a Reconciliation station and...

Make the sign of the cross and greet Father. Tell him how long since your last confession.

Tell your sins to the priest.

Listen to the priest for counsel and for your penance.

Say the "Act of Contrition" or a prayer of sorrow in your own words.

Listen to the priest's prayer of forgiveness (absolution) and answer "Amen." Thank Father and return to the pew.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O 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