

Examination of Conscience

Source and Author Unknown

<http://www.cin.org/avatar/examcon.html>

Prayer Before Examination of Conscience

I am perfectly sensible, O my God, that I have in many ways offended Thy divine majesty, and provoked Thy wrath by my sins; and that if I obtain not pardon I shall be cast out of thy sight forever. I desire, therefore, at present to call myself to an account, and look into all the sins whereby I have displeased Thee; but O my God, how miserably shall I deceive myself if Thou assist me not in this work by Thy heavenly light. Grant me, therefore, at present, Thy grace, whereby I may discover all my imperfections, see all my failings, and duly call to mind all my sins: for I know that nothing is hidden from Thy sight. But I confess myself in the dark as to my own failings: my passions blind me, self-love flatters me, presumption deludes me, and though I have many sins which stare me in the face, and cannot be hidden, yet how many, too, are there quite concealed from me! But discover even those to me, O Lord! enlighten my darkness, cure my blindness, and remove every veil that hides my sins from me, that I may be no longer a secret to myself, nor a stranger to my own failings, not ever flatter myself with the thoughts of having repented, and at the same time nourish folly and vice within my breast. Come, Holy Ghost, and by a beam of Thy divine light illumine my understanding, that I may have a perfect view of all my sins and iniquities, and that, sincerely repenting of them, I may know Thee, and be again received into Thy favor. A Method of Examination of Conscience, according to the threefold Duty we owe:

(I) To God. - (II) To our Neighbor. - (III) To ourselves.

I . In Relation to God:

1. Have you omitted morning or evening prayer, or neglected to make your daily examination of conscience? Have you prayed negligently, and with willful distraction?
2. Have you spent your time, especially on Sundays and holidays, not in sluggishly lying abed, or in any sort of idle entertainment, but in reading, praying, or other pious exercises; and taken care that those under your charge have done the like, and not wanted the instructions necessary for their condition, nor time for prayer, or to prepare for the sacraments?

3. Have you spoken irreverently of God and holy things? Have you taken his name in vain, or told untruths?

4. Have you omitted your duty through human respect, interest, compliance, etc. ?

5. Have you been zealous for God's honor, for justice, virtue and truth, and reproofed such as act otherwise?

6. Have you resigned your will to God in troubles necessities, sickness, etc. ?

7. Have you faithfully resisted thoughts of infidelity, distrust, presumption, impurity, etc. ?

II In Relation to Your Neighbor

1. Have you disobeyed your superiors, murmured against their commands, or spoken of them contemptuously?

2. Have you been troubled, peevish, or impatient, when told of your faults, and not corrected them? Have you scorned the good advice of others, or censured their proceedings?

3. Have you offended any one by injurious threatening words or actions?

4. Or lessened their reputation by any sort of detractions; or in any matter of importance?

5. Or spread any report, true or false, that exposed your neighbor to contempt, or made him undervalued?

6. Have you been carrying stories backward and forward, created discord and misunderstanding between neighbors?

7. Have you been forward(1) or peevish towards any one in your carriage, speech, or conversation?

8. Or taken pleasure to vex, mortify, or provoke them to swear, curse, or any ways offend God?

9. Have you mocked or reproached them for their corporal or spiritual imperfections?

10. Have you been excessive in rephending those under your care, or been wanting in giving them just reproof?

11. Have you borne with their oversights and imperfections, and given them good counsel?

12. Have you been solicitous for such as are under your charge, and provided for their souls and bodies?

III In Relation to Yourself.

1. Have you been obstinate in following your own will, or in defending your own opinion, in things either indifferent, dangerous or scandalous?

2. Have you taken pleasure in hearing yourself praised, or yielded to thoughts of vanity?

3. Have you indulged yourself in overmuch ease, or any ways yielded to sensuality?

4. Has your conversation been edifying and moderate; or have you been forward(1), proud, or troublesome to others?

5. Have you spent overmuch time in play, or useless employments, and thereby omitted, or put off your devotions to unseasonable times?

If such as confess often fall into any of the more grievous sins not here mentioned, their own memory will easily suggest them, since it is impossible for a tender soul to forget any mortal offense, which must of necessity afflict her; and therefore it may not be necessary for them to turn over the following table of sins, which is chiefly intended for general confessions.

An Examination for Confession

The First Commandment is Broken

First, by Sins against Faith.

1. To be ignorant of the principal mysteries of Christianity; of the Creed, of the Commandments of God and his Church, or of the Sacraments.

2. To give God's honor to any created being or thing whatsoever; to pay divine worship, or to ascribe God's exclusive powers or attributes, to any being except God himself.
3. Willfully to doubt, or obstinately to err, in any point of faith, out of human respect, interest, fear etc.
4. To favor heretics or wicked men, in supporting or approving their opinions or actions.
5. To endanger our faith by reading their books with pleasure.
6. To examine divine mysteries with curiosity, and secrets of Providence by pure human reason.
7. To condemn or deride holy things.
8. To abuse the words of the holy scripture, by perverting them to a wicked or profane sense, making them subservient to jests, or other ill purposes.
9. To desire to know things to come, which belong to God alone, or things past or present, which are hid from us, and for this end to employ unlawful means, as fortune tellers, or other superstitious inventions.
10. To give credit to dreams, or make superstitious observations; to employ prayers or sacred names to ill uses; to use charms etc.

Secondly, by Sins against Hope.

1. By distrusting the mercies of God, and despairing of the pardon of our sins.
2. By presuming on God's goodness, without the least concern of amendment.
3. By deferring our conversion or repentance till the end of life.
4. By exposing ourselves to the danger of offending God either by company, reading, or otherwise, which is called tempting God.
5. By exposing ourselves, without necessity, to some corporal danger; as sickness, wounds or death.
6. By neglecting the remedies which God has appointed in these dangers, as physic for the body, or prayer and the sacraments for the soul.

Thirdly, by Sins against Charity.

1. By not loving God above all things, but rather choosing willfully to offend him, than suffer any loss of honor, riches, etc.
2. By preferring the love of man before the love of God; or offending him through fear of being jeered or slighted.
3. By omitting our duty through shame, or human respect.
4. By thinking seldom of God, or being ashamed to speak of him; or by not hearkening to his inspirations, by forgetting his benefits, or neglecting to give him thanks.

Fourthly, by Sin against Religion.

1. By not adoring God, or praying to him but seldom.
2. By praying without attention, and with willful distractions.
3. By a want of respect to God in time of prayer; or by talking or being present in holy places without a becoming modesty and gravity in our looks, words and actions.

Fifthly, by Sins against the Care we ought to have of our Salvation.

1. By a love of idleness.
2. By being too solicitous in temporal concerns, and neglecting the means of salvation.
3. By deferring amendment of life, or immediately desisting, after having begun it.
4. By neglecting the means of salvation; as the sacraments, prayer, good works, or performing them without devotion.

The Second Commandment is Broken.

1. By taking the name of God in vain.
2. By swearing to what one knows or doubts to be false.

3. By swearing to what is unjust, or prejudicial to others.
4. By swearing without necessity, though the thing itself be true and just.
5. By blaspheming God or holy things.
6. By cursing one's self or others, or taking pleasure in hearing others swear or curse; or by provoking them to it.
7. By not reprehending them when one could and ought.
8. By making a vow to do what is impossible to fulfill; or to do what is evil and displeasing to God; or to do what one never intends to perform.
9. By breaking lawful vows, or deferring to fulfill them without just cause.

The Third Commandment is Broken.

1. By doing servile works on Sunday, or causing others to do the like without necessity.
2. By employing a considerable part of Sundays or holidays in temporal affairs, as is often the case with merchants, advocates, solicitors, etc.
3. By omitting to hear Mass, or not hearing it with due attention and reverence.
4. By spending Sundays and holidays in idleness, gaming, dancing, feasting, and other recreations.
5. By not dedicating a considerable part of those days to reading and praying, and by not taking care that those under your charge do the like.

The Fourth Commandment is Broken.

I. By children:

1. Not paying due respect to their parents, or by despising them either in their hearts or actions.
2. By not loving them, but wishing their death, or some misfortune; or by forsaking them in their necessities.

3. By not cheerfully obeying them; or by obeying them in things unlawful.
4. By slighting their representations, and resisting their corrections.
5. By putting them into a passion, and not taking care to pacify them.
6. By not executing their last will and testament, or by delaying to do so.

II. By parents not discharging their duty towards their children.

1. In not loving them, and supplying their corporal necessities.
2. In not being careful of their salvation.
3. In not correcting them when it is necessary; in flattering their passions, or indulging their evil inclinations.
4. In treating them with too much severity.
5. In not setting them good example.
6. In forcing them in the choice of their state in life.

The Fifth Commandment is Broken.

1. By anger, quarreling, or threatening, or by injurious or reproachful words, or actions against our neighbors.
2. By revenge, or deliberate thoughts or desires of revenge.
3. By provoking, striking, challenging, wounding, or being the cause of another's death.
4. By bearing malice, refusing to salute or speak to any neighbor out of hatred or aversion, or refusing to be reconciled to him.

The Sixth Commandment is Broken.

I. By the hearing.

1. In willingly giving ear to immodest words, discourses, songs, etc.

II. By the sight.

1. In looking on immodest objects,
2. In reading or keeping immodest books; lending them to others; or neglecting to suppress them when we may.

III. By the tongue.

1. In speaking immodest words.
2. In relating improper stories or wicked actions of ourselves or others.

IV. By the touch.

1. In using indecent actions.

V. By thoughts.

1. By entertaining impure thoughts willfully and with delight.

VI. By immodest actions.

1. In committing the sin of impurity; and whether effected by soliciting, seducing with promises, or forcing; whether it be fornication, adultery, or incest.
2. In sins against nature.

The Seventh Commandment is Broken.

1. By taking another's goods, and to what value.
2. By retaining what we know belongs to another.
3. By denying our debts, or willfully delaying payment, to the prejudice of our neighbors.
4. By making unjust bargains or contracts, into which every trade or profession ought to make a strict inquiry.
5. By causing any damage to our neighbors.
6. By putting off false and counterfeit money.
7. By desiring another's property.
8. By not giving alms when necessity requires.

9. By not paying dues to our pastors, or by not contributing to the decent support of religious worship.

10. By simony.

The Eighth Commandment is Broken.

1. By witnessing what is false, or defending a false accusation, as in lawyers and solicitors; or condemning the innocent, or discharging the guilty, as judges and arbitrators.

2. By detraction, either in laying something false to another's charge, or reporting for truth what is merely doubtful; or in revealing something as yet secret and unknown, though true, to the prejudice of some third person; with a declaration, whether it be done out of levity and indiscretion, or out of malice or ill-will; whether in the presence of many, or in a matter of importance.

3. By lying, or speaking what we judge to be otherwise than we say; whether out of custom, or to the considerable prejudice of others.

4. By hypocrisy, which is a lie in action.

The Ninth and Tenth are Broken.

By all unlawful and willful desires of impurity and theft; which have been already mentioned in the sixth and seventh commandment.

The Precepts of the Church.

I. To keep certain appointed days holy, with the obligation of hearing Mass, and resting from servile works.

II. To observe the days of abstinence and fasting.

III. To confess our sins to our pastors, at least once a year.

IV. To receive the blessed Sacrament at Easter, or thereabouts.

V. To contribute to the support of our pastors.

VI. To obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony.

VII. To participate in the Church's mission of Evangelization of Souls. (2)

The Seven Deadly Sins.

The Sin of Pride consists:

1. In entertaining too great an opinion of ourselves, or in valuing ourselves above our deserts.
2. In publishing what we think good in ourselves, that we may be esteemed by others.
3. In arrogance, by attributing to ourselves the good we have not.
4. In presumption and ambition, by confiding too much in our own strength, conceiving ourselves capable of accomplishing things above our abilities, and in rashly attempting them.
5. In contempt of others, on account of the good opinions we have of ourselves, and when this contempt is manifested by words or actions or by being severe and exacting on inferiors.
6. In want of submission to our superiors, by disobeying them, blaming their conduct, or murmuring against them.
7. In not acknowledging our faults; or when, in confessing the facts, we maintain we have done well, or at least allege false excuses.
8. In contempt of admonitions and corrections.
9. In discord.
10. In hypocrisy.
11. In curiosity, which inclines us to know things prejudicial to our salvation.
12. By ingratitude for God's benefits.

(The sins of covetousness, luxury, and sloth, have been already examined in the first, sixth, and seventh commandments.)

The Sin of Gluttony

In eating or drinking to excess, as far as they are prejudicial, either to our health or our reason, or any ways scandalous, or of ill example to others.

The Sin of Envy.

1. Trouble at the good success of our neighbor, or when we endeavor to do him an unkindness, or speak often against him, or create an ill opinion of him in the mind of another.
2. When we rejoice at our neighbor's harm.

The Sin of Anger.

1. Not to endure any thing contrary to our inclinations.
2. To suffer ourselves to be hurried away by the emotions of wrath against those that give us any trouble.
3. To proceed to quarrels, injurious language, oaths, curses, threats; to take revenge, or to desire and wish to be in a capacity of exercising it.
4. To refuse to pardon injuries, or to be reconciled to our enemies, or to such of our neighbors with whom we have had some misunderstanding, or falling out.

A Prayer for Obtaining Contrition.

I have now here before me, O Lord, a sad prospect of the manifold offenses whereby I have displeased thy divine Majesty, and which I am assured will appear in judgment against me if, by repentance and a hearty sorrow, my soul be not prepared to receive thy pardon. But this sorrow and this repentance, O Lord, must be the free gift of thy mercy, without which all my endeavors will be in vain, and I shall be forever miserable. Have pity, therefore, on me, O merciful Father, and pour forth into my heart thy grace, whereby I may sincerely repent of all my sins; grant me true contrition, that I may bewail my base ingratitude, and grieve from my heart for having offended so good a God. Permit me not to be deluded by a false sorrow, as I fear I have been too often, through my own weakness and neglect; but let it now be thy gift, descending from thee, the Father of Lights, that so my repentance may be accompanied by an amendment and a change of life, that being thus acquitted from the guilt of my sins, I may once more be received into the number of thy servants. Amen.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) "forward": 1. not easily controlled; stubbornly willful; contrary 2. adverse; unfavorable.

(2) This last is an expansion of the traditional six, made fairly recently by the bishops at an annual meeting of the NCCB.

More can be found on the topic in [The Precepts of the Church](#). [The Great of Sophronius](#)



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