



EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE

Beginning with a practical Examination of Conscience can be of tremendous value in starting anew in the spiritual life. We invite you to use this tool to help you call to mind the ways in which you have sinned and set yourself apart from God, before approaching a priest in the holy Sacrament of Reconciliation.

I. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.

- Have I valued any finite thing or reality above and beyond my relationship with God, such as wealth, pleasure, or power? Have I made my career, my family, specific material goods, or even another person my highest priority?
- Have I reduced God to a thing that I seek to manipulate or control? Do I put God to the test or try to fit Him into my own pre-conceived notions about what He should be or do for me?
- Have I participated in “superstitious practices,” such as astrology, magic, fortune-telling, or anything that attributes divinity to an object or idea that is not God?

II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have I treated sacred or holy things with contempt or indifference? Do I give proper and due reverence to God by respecting His name, His Word and Church, and his creation as a whole?
- Have I taken false oaths or offered empty promises? Do I needlessly swear in the name of God?
- Have I reduced the dignity of the name of God or of the saints by using their names in a profane or demeaning way?

III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- Have I attended Mass on Sundays and Holy days? Have I made an honest attempt to be truly present in the celebration, offering it my full attention and reverence?
- Have I respected the Sabbath by dedicating time for the renewal of mind, body and soul? Have I sought to commune with God in prayer and participate in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?
- Have I willfully engaged in activities that deprive others of the opportunity to worship the Lord? Have I carelessly participated in unnecessary commerce or work?

IV. Honor your father and mother.

- Have I contributed to the well being (physical, spiritual, and psychological) of my parents and the other members of my family?
- Have I respected legitimate authority (family, civil, religious, and vocational) and sought to contribute to the common good?
- Have I been just and honest in terms of my personal roles and responsibilities?

V. You shall not kill.

- Have I done violence to others (bodily, spiritually, or psychologically) by participating in physical or emotional brutality or consciously leading others toward sin and falsehood?
- Have I damaged the reputation or livelihood of another person through gossip or false accusation?
- Have I willfully disregarded the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death by using contraceptives and abortifacients, procuring or assisting in an abortion, or supporting the administration of euthanasia procedures?

VI. You shall not commit adultery.

- Have I lived with an attitude of reverence and respect for the Sacrament of Marriage, especially the promise of fidelity to one's spouse? Do I seek to love and honor my spouse (or future spouse) as Christ loves the Church?
- Have I sought sexual gratification outside of the Sacrament of Marriage through sexual infidelity, pre-marital sexual relations, or self-gratification?
- Have I demeaned the marriage covenant through the lustful objectification of an individual for my pleasure, including pornographic habits?

VII. You shall not steal.

- Have I deliberately taken another person's property?
- Have I refused to compensate another person for a loss that was caused by my intentional neglect or carelessness?
- Have I fairly and rightly compensated others for goods or services that I have received?

VIII. You shall not bear false witnesses against your neighbor.

- Have I lied or withheld the truth in order to serve my own personal gain?
- Have I misrepresented the character or reputation of another person?
- Have I intentionally led others to believe something about the Church's teaching or practices that was simply not true?

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- Have I willfully objectified another person as a means toward my own sexual gratification?
- Have I sought sexual relations with someone who was married or who was outside of my own marital covenant (or future marital covenant)?
- Have I sought emotional intimacy with another person in such a way that endangers my own or the other person's marital commitment?

X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Have I allowed the meaning and purpose of my life to be dominated by the pursuit and attainment of material goods?
- Have I been pre-occupied with envy of another person's success? Have I taken pleasure in the misfortune of others?
- Have I lived with a disposition of gratitude to God for the goods and blessings I have received?

