

Examination of Conscience

1. Place yourself in the presence of God.
 - * Look at the crucifix and makes acts of humility and self-abnegation.
 - * Think of the infinite love of Our Lord, His divine compassion, and His desire for our happiness.
 - * Consider the divine attributes of Almighty God (e.g. His love, wisdom, goodness) and the qualities of Our Lord's character (His strength, courage, tenderness, patience, humility, kindness, purity, meekness).
 - * Be certain of Our Lady's assistance and Our Lord's desire to impart His forgiveness.
2. Ask the Holy Ghost for the light to know your sins and the grace to be sorry for them - i.e., to detest them because they offend God, to promise to avoid them in the future and to atone for them.
3. Consider your state in life: married, single, parent, student, employee, etc. and the duties attached to it.
4. Think of what sin is: a willful thought, desire, word, action or omission contrary to the law of God. It is hateful because it is:
 - * disobedience
 - * ingratitude
 - * unfaithfulness
 - * injustice
 - * a crime against the majesty of God - a defiant assault against our Father and Benefactor
 - * a scorning of God's gifts to us, His children
 - * the cause of the passion and death of Our Savior and the sorrows of Our Lady.
5. Remember the kinds of actual sin (due to malice, weakness, deliberate ignorance):
 - A) Mortal sin - a serious sin - we turn away from God and willingly attach ourselves inordinately to some created good.

Effects:

- * the banishment of the Blessed Trinity from our souls
- * the loss of sanctifying grace, charity, infused moral virtues and gifts
- * the death of the soul
- * the loss of past merit
- * the punishment of hell if one dies in this state

CONDITIONS FOR MORTAL SIN (all three must be present):

- 1) **Grave matter** (thought, desire, word, act, or omission must be seriously wrong or believed to be seriously wrong)
- 2) **Sufficient reflection** of its wrongfulness at time the sin is committed
- 3) **Full consent** of the will

(Without all three it is either a venial sin or no sin.)

- B) Venial sin - a less serious offence against God Effects: * deprives the soul of many graces
 - * lessens fervor
 - * gradually disposes the soul to mortal sin
 - * results in a long expiation in purgatory

(The following is a guide. It should not be used to probe the conscience excessively thus causing discouragement and anxiety.)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I AM THE LORD THY GOD; THOU SHALT NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME. Denial or doubt of the Faith, murmuring against God, despair of His mercy, neglect of daily prayers, false worship, irreverence of holy things or persons, consulting fortune tellers, superstition, occult practices.
2. THOU SHOLT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. Using God's name in vain, blasphemy, lying under oath, unnecessary oaths, cursing, swearing and vulgar language.

3. REMEMBER THOU KEEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY. Deliberately missing Mass or performing unnecessary servile works on Sunday and Holydays, late for Mass, inattentive at Mass, keeping others from Mass.
4. HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER. Disobeying, angering, grieving, or insulting parents or superiors, refusing to help them when in need, inciting others against them, neglecting them, angering, grieving, or insulting spouse, accusing spouse wrongfully, giving bad example, failure in duties towards spouse, failure to provide for family, failure to discipline and train children, neglect of their religious instruction, failure to show love, favoritism.
5. THOU SHALT NOT KILL. Anger, fighting, quarrelling, hatred, holding a grudge, suicide, drunkenness, drug abuse, causing danger or death to another, desire that harm come to another; causing, counseling, or consenting to abortion.
6. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.
9. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE. The penitent must consider past thoughts, words, desires, and acts against these commandments. Are you single or married? Do these thoughts, words, desires or acts refer to a single or married person or a relative? Impure desires, taking pleasure in impure thoughts, speaking immodestly, singing or listening with pleasure to immodest songs, reading immodest literature, immodest looks; keeping, showing, or looking at immodest pictures; going to immodest places of amusement, immodest acts before others or alone, contraception. There are other kinds of impurity known only to God and the sinner.
7. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL
10. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S GOODS. Stealing, destroying the property of others, taking from employer, wasting time for which one is paid, neglect of paying bills or just debts, defrauding employees of wages, desire to possess unjustly neighbor's goods, cheating.
8. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR. Lying, malicious gossip, carrying stories, calumny (lying about another to ruin his name), detraction (telling the secret faults of another), perjury, rash judgment.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

1. To assist at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess our sins at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of the Church.
6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage.

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS AND THEIR VICES

- * PRIDE (inordinate desire to excel) - excessive self-love, domineer-ing, overly sensitive, attributing talents to self, presumption (acting as if you are more capable than you really are), despising others, ambition, disobedience, tardiness, hypocrisy, vainglory, boastful-ness, singularity, ostentation, stubbornness, haughtiness and disdain in speech and behavior, attention-seeking.
- *AVARICE (inordinate love of temporal things) - anxiety about security and acquiring wealth to the neglect of duty, excessive gambling, stinginess, hardheartedness, harshness in demanding payment of debts, disquiet, deceit, dishonesty, violation of contracts, cheating employer or employee, fraud, theft, failure to support the Church and promote the Faith.
- * LUST (inordinate appetite for carnal pleasure) - impurity or im-modesty with self or others in thought, desire, word or deed; artificial contraception, bad literature or movies, spiritual blindness, poor judgment, impetuosity of decisions, dissipation, inconstancy, love of the world and self even to the hatred of God the Avenger, inordinate fear of death.
- * ANGER (inordinate inclination to take revenge) - unreasonable or unjust indignation, revenge, thoughts of revenge, blasphemy, cursing, fits of passion, insults, quarrelling, fighting, striking, wounding, killing, abortion, suicide, euthanasia.

* **GLUTTONY** (inordinate indulgence of food or drink) - neglect of duty, buffoonery (acting in a foolish manner), improper jokes, foolish conversation, talkativeness, stupidity, drunkenness, filthiness, abuse of drugs.

* **ENVY** (willful grieving over another's good, spiritual or temporal, which is regarded as diminishing one's own) - hatred (willing evil to another), detraction (telling the truth about another to ruin his name), murmuring, calumny (spreading lies about another to ruin his name), resentment over the good and joy over the misfortune of another, resentment of honoring neighbor.

* **SLOTH** (repugnance to work and a tendency to idleness) - a sadness over effort demanded to do good, neglect of duty in state of life or tasks given, hatred of spiritual things, spite, despair, discouragement, faintheartedness (giving up easily in the face of adversity), sluggishness, malice, wandering affection, seeking after forbidden things, forgetfulness of the commandments of the Church, neglect of domestic duties, neglect to raise children and to teach them the Faith and moral values.

SINS AGAINST THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

* **FAITH** - heresy, schism, apostasy, doubt, infidelity, blasphemy, deliberate ignorance, failure to know or to profess the Faith, failure to defend God, Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the Church, etc.; cooperation in non-Catholic worship, marriage outside the Church.

* **HOPE** - presumption, discouragement, despair, failure to hope in God.

* **CHARITY** - hate for God, neighbor or self; unkindness or cruelty in thought, word, or deed; human respect, failure to help neighbor in need or to give alms, failure to give fraternal correction when necessary, giving scandal in word or deed (especially to children or the innocent), failure to show love and care for parents or children, cooperation in evil, disgust for spiritual things, insensitivity to the feelings of others, pettiness.

SINS AGAINST THE MORAL VIRTUES

* **PRUDENCE** - lack of docility to good counsels, imprudence, negligence, cunning, prudence of the flesh (i.e., deceiving others, gratifying self), solicitude for the world and worldly values.

* **JUSTICE** - Against God: irreligion, irreverence, impenitence, sacrilegious confession or Communion, willful distractions, failure to pray, to assist at Mass, or to keep promises to God, squandering goods, superstition, impiety.

Against neighbor: disobedience, detraction, calumny, lying, stealing, cheating, failure to make restitution, flattery, avarice, waste-fulness, ingratitude, rudeness, failure to keep one's word or to respect another's rights, insolence, favoritism, harsh treatment of children, overindulgence toward children, making excuses for oneself, insult, mutilation, abortion, revealing secrets, violating privacy of one's body, rash judgment, murmuring, criticizing, carelessness, complaining, nagging.

* **FORTITUDE** - disloyalty to God and neighbor, cowardliness, excessive boldness, impatience, abandoning duty, pusillanimity (inordinate sadness), slowness to resist temptation, lack of zeal.

* **TEMPERANCE** - excess in food or drink, illicit sexual pleasure in thought, word or deed; anger, pride, inordinate curiosity, abusing drugs, neglect to discipline children, sloth.

WAYS OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER'S SINS

counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise or flattery, concealment, cooperation, silence, defense

MANNER OF CONFESSION

1. FORM:

Bless me, Father. I confess to Almighty God and to you, Father, that I have sinned. It has been ... since my last confession. I accuse myself of ... (mention sins).

N.B. All mortal sins must be confessed in number and kind as best as one can remember. There is no need for lengthy explanations, it is only necessary to mention those circumstances which may alter the nature or gravity of a sin.

Deliberately to conceal a mortal sin is a grave sacrilege and invalidates the Sacrament. To receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin is also a sacrilege. All sacrilegious confessions and Communions must be mentioned in confession.

If you later recall a mortal sin you are certain that you have not confessed, mention it in at your next confession.

Make your confession humble, sincere, and entire. It is wise when mentioning your sins to add the reasons why these offenses were committed.

Admit as well the sinful dispositions and evil inclinations which are often found in the soul.

At the conclusion of the sins told ... **For these and for all the sins of my past life, especially for ... (you may include previously confessed sins in general or in particular, the sorrow for which you may wish to renew) I am heartily sorry and humbly ask pardon from God and penance and absolution from you, Father.**

2. Listen to the counsel of the priest and the penance he imposes.

3. With true sorrow and confidence in divine forgiveness, say the Act of Contrition --- **O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.**

4. Thank the priest and say your penance as soon as possible with a desire to atone for all your sins. Thank Our Lord for His goodness in having forgiven you. Thank the Blessed Virgin for her motherly care and for having brought you to the Sacrament of Penance. Say a prayer for the priest who absolved you.

5. Be at peace of conscience and never despair of the mercy of God!

SERVANTS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

8528 Kenosha Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80908-5004

© 1983, 2021



www.servi.org