

FAITH

- 1 Do I make an honest effort to grow in the virtue of faith by daily mental prayer on the mysteries of the faith as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ?
2. Do I make at least a short act of faith every day?
- 3 Do I pray daily for an increase of faith?
- 4 Do I ever tempt God by relying on my own strength to cope with the trials in my life?
- 5 Do I unnecessarily read or listen to those who oppose or belittle what I know are truths of my Catholic faith?
- 6 What have I done today to externally profess my faith?
- 7 Have I allowed human respect to keep me from giving expression to my faith?
8. Do I make a serious effort to resolve difficulties that may arise about my faith?
- 9 Do I ever defend my faith, prudently and charitably, when someone says something contrary to what I know is to be believed?
10. Have I helped someone overcome a difficulty against the faith?

HOPE

- 1 Do I immediately say a short prayer when I find myself getting discouraged?
- 2 Do I daily say a short act of hope?
- 3 Do I dwell on my worries instead of dismissing them from my mind?
- 4 Do I fail in the virtue of hope by my attachment to the things of this world?
- 5 Do I try to see God's providence in everything that "happens" in my life?
- 6 Do I try to see everything from the viewpoint of eternity?
- 7 Am I confident that, with God's grace, I will be saved?
- 8 Do I allow myself to worry about my past life and thus weaken my hope in God's mercy?
9. Do I try to combine every fully deliberate action with at least a momentary prayer for divine help?
10. How often today have I complained, even internally?

CHARITY

- 1 Have I told God today that I love Him?
- 2 Do I tell Jesus that I love Him with my whole heart?
- 3 Do I take the occasion to tell God that I love Him whenever I experience something I naturally dislike?
- 4 Have I capitalized on the difficulties today to tell God that I love Him just because He sent me the trial or misunderstanding?
- 5 Do I see God's love for me in allowing me to prove my love for Him in the crosses He sent me today?
- 6 Have I seen God's grace to prove my love for Him in every person whom I met today?
7. Have I failed in charity by speaking unkindly about others?
- 8 Have I dwelt on what I considered someone's unkindness toward me today?
9. Is there someone that I consciously avoid because I dislike the person?
10. Did I try to carry on a conversation today with someone who is difficult to talk to?
11. Have I been stubborn in asserting my own will?
12. How thoughtful have I been today in doing some small favor for someone?
13. Have I allowed my mood to prevent me from being thoughtful of others today?
14. Have I been cheerful today in my dealings with others?
15. Do I control my uncharitable thoughts as soon as they arise in my mind?

GOING TO CONFESSION / RECONCILIATION

Begin your confession with the sign of the cross, **"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Bless me Father for I have sinned. My last confession was _____ weeks (months, years) ago."**

Say the sins that you remember. Start with the one(s) that is most difficult to say. (In order to make a good confession the faithful must confess all mortal sins, according to kind and number.) After confessing all the sins you remember since your last good confession, you may conclude by saying, **"I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life."**

Listen to the words of the priest. He will assign you some penance. Doing the penance will diminish the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. When invited, express some prayer of sorrow or Act of Contrition such as:

An Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because I have offended you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

At the End of Confession

Listen to the words of absolution, the sacramental forgiveness of the Church through the ordained priest.

As you listen to the words of forgiveness you may make the sign of the cross with the priest. If he closes by saying, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good," answer, "For His mercy endures forever."

After Confession

Give thanks to God for forgiving you again. If you recall some serious sin you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others, but be sure to confess it in your next Confession.

Do your assigned Penance.

Resolve to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation often. We Catholics are fortunate to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the ordinary way for us to have our sins forgiven. This sacrament is a powerful help to get rid of our weaknesses, grow in holiness, and lead a balanced and virtuous life.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

It's important for a good Catholic examination of conscience to be thorough. This will help you learn about things that you may not be aware of. It's also a chance to *develop* your conscience. This is a critical aid for the beginning Catholic. To make an examination: Set aside some quiet time for reflection. Start by praying to the Holy Spirit, asking for help in making a good examination to prepare for Confession. Read through the items on this list and honestly reflect on your behavior for each item. If necessary, take this list or some brief notes (keep them private!) to Confession to help you remember things. A Catholic examination of conscience traditionally follows the outline of the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Catholic Church.

The Ten Commandments

First Commandment

I am the LORD your God. You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.

Have I...

Disobeyed the commandments of God or the Church?

Refused to accept what God has revealed as true, or what the Catholic Church proposes for belief?

Denied the existence of God?

Nourished and protected my faith?

Rejected everything opposed to a sound faith?

Deliberately misled others about doctrine or the faith?

Rejected the Catholic faith, joined another Christian denomination, or joined or practiced another religion?

Joined a group forbidden to Catholics (Masons, communists, etc.)?

Despaired about my salvation or the forgiveness of my sins?

Presumed on God's mercy? (Committing a sin in expectation of forgiveness, or asking for forgiveness without conversion and practicing virtue.)

Loved someone or something more than God (money, power, sex, ambition, etc.)?

Let someone or something influence my choices more than God?

Engaged in superstitious practices? (Incl. horoscopes, fortune tellers, etc.)

Been involved in the occult? (Seances, ouija board, worship of Satan, etc.)

Formally left the Catholic Church?

Hidden a serious sin or told a lie in confession?

Second Commandment

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

Have I...

Used the name of God in cursing or blasphemy?

Failed to keep vows or promises that I have made to God?

Spoken about the Faith, the Church, the saints, or sacred things with irreverence, hatred or defiance?

Fifth Precept of the Church

You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.

Have I...

Done penance every Friday, if not abstaining from meat, then some other form of penance?

Abstained from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent (if I am 14 years of age or older)?

Fasted on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (if I am between the ages of 18 and 59)?

Spent time in prayer, doing spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and practicing self-denial?

Sixth Precept of the Church

You shall contribute to the support of the Church.

Have I...

Contributed a just amount of my time, talents and money to support my parish and the work of the Church?

Seventh Precept of the Church

You shall observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage

Have I

Been living in a valid and licit marriage according to the laws of the Catholic Church?

Abandoned my spouse and family by separation or divorce?

Kept company with someone whom I cannot marry in the Catholic Church?

Given scandal by living with a member of the opposite sex without the benefit of a marriage blessed by the Catholic Church?

Entered into marriage with more than one person at the same time?

PARTICULAR EXAMEN ON THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Before applying the particular examen to my own spiritual life, it is well to first ask myself, "What are the virtues that I know from experience I most need to develop?"

The reason why this question should first be answered is that no two of us are equally prone to commit the same kind of sins. Nor are we personally always tempted in the same direction. There is wisdom in first knowing enough about myself, to be able to get to the root of my own moral weakness. Otherwise, I may be ignoring what really needs attention in my spiritual life and concentrating on what is not so necessary for me at this time in my service of God. Moreover, it would be a mistake to suppose that by attending to my moral failings, I am being "negative" in my pursuit of holiness. On the contrary. In God's providence, He allows us to fail in those areas in which He especially wants us to grow in virtue. We can fail in the practice of these virtues either by commission, omission, or by tepidity, in not acting as generously as we might in responding to the grace we have received from God.

Eighth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I...

Lied?

Knowingly and willfully deceived another?

Perjured myself under oath?

Gossiped?

Committed detraction? (Destroying a person's reputation by telling others about his faults for no good reason.)

Committed slander or calumny? (Telling lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation.)

Committed libel? (Writing lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation.)

Been guilty of rash judgment? (Assuming the worst of another person based on circumstantial evidence.)

Failed to make reparation for a lie I told, or for harm done to a person's reputation?

Failed to speak out in defense of the Catholic Faith, the Church, or of another person?

Betrayed another's confidence through speech?

The Precepts of the Church**First Precept of the Church**

You shall attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

(see examination under the Third Commandment)

Second Precept of the Church

You shall confess your sins at least once a year.

Have I...

Made a good Confession of my mortal sins least once a year?

Purposely omitted telling my mortal sins in my last Confession?

Performed the penance I was given?

Made reparation for any harm I have done to others?

Third Precept of the Church

You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.

Have I...

Fulfilled my Easter duty to receive Holy Communion at least once between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday?

Received Holy Communion while in the state of mortal sin?

Fasted an hour before receiving Holy Communion?

Received Holy Communion more than twice in one day?

Fourth Precept of the Church

You shall keep holy the Holy days of Obligation.

(see examination under the Third Commandment)

Watched television or movies, or listened to music that treated God, the Church, the saints, or sacred things irreverently?

Used vulgar, suggestive or obscene speech?

Belittled others in my speech?

Behaved disrespectfully in Church?

Misused places or things set apart for the worship of God?

Committed perjury? (Breaking an oath or lying under oath.)

Blamed God for my failings?

Third Commandment

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

Have I...

Set time aside each day for personal prayer to God?

Missed Mass on Sunday or Holy Days (through own fault w/o sufficient reason)?

Committed a sacrilege against the Blessed Sacrament?

Received a sacrament while in the state of [mortal sin](#)?

Habitually come late to and/or leave early from Mass without a good reason?

Shop, labor, or do business unnecessarily on Sunday or other Holy Days of Obligation?

Not attend to taking my children to Mass?

Knowingly eat meat on a forbidden day (or not fasting on a fast day)?

Eat or drink within one hour of receiving Communion (other than medical need)?

Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

Have I...

(If still under my parents' care) Obeyed all that my parents reasonably asked of me?

Neglected the needs of my parents in their old age or in their time of need?

(If still in school) Obeyed the reasonable demands of my teachers?

Neglected to give my children proper food, clothing, shelter, education, discipline and care (even after Confirmation)?

Provided for the religious education and formation of my children for as long as they are under my care?

Ensured that my children still under my care regularly frequent the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion?

Educated my children in a way that corresponds to my religious convictions?

Provided my children with a positive, prudent and personalized education in the Catholic teaching on human sexuality?

Been to my children a good example of how to live the Catholic Faith?

Prayed with and for my children?

Lived in humble obedience to those who legitimately exercise authority over me?

Have I broken the law?

Have I supported or voted for a politician whose positions are opposed to the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church?

Fifth Commandment*You shall not kill.*

Have I...

Unjustly and intentionally killed a human being?

Been involved in an abortion, directly or indirectly (through advice, etc.)?

Seriously considered or attempted suicide?

Supported, promoted or encouraged the practice of assisted suicide or mercy killing?

Deliberately desired to kill an innocent human being?

Unjustly inflicted bodily harm on another person?

Unjustly threatened another person with bodily harm?

Verbally or emotionally abused another person?

Hated another person, or wished him evil?

Been prejudiced, or unjustly discriminated against others because of their race, color, nationality, sex or religion?

Joined a hate group?

Purposely provoked another by teasing or nagging?

Recklessly endangered my life or health, or that of another, by my actions?

Driven recklessly or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?

Abused alcohol or other drugs?

Sold or given drugs to others to use for non-therapeutic purposes?

Used tobacco immoderately?

Over-eaten?

Encouraged others to sin by giving scandal?

Helped another to commit a mortal sin (through advice, driving them somewhere, etc.)?

Caused serious injury or death by criminal neglect?

Indulged in serious anger?

Refused to control my temper?

Been mean to, quarreled with, or willfully hurt someone?

Been unforgiving to others, when mercy or pardon was requested?

Sought revenge or hoped something bad would happen to someone?

Delighted to see someone else get hurt or suffer?

Treated animals cruelly, causing them to suffer or die needlessly?

Sixth & Ninth Commandments*You shall not commit adultery.**You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.*

Have I...

Practiced the virtue of chastity?

Given in to lust? (The desire for sexual pleasure unrelated to spousal love in marriage.)

Used an artificial means of birth control?

Refused to be open to conception, without just cause? (*Catechism*, 2368)

Participated in immoral techniques for in vitro fertilization or artificial insemination?

Sterilized my sex organs for contraceptive purposes?

Deprived my spouse of the marital right, without just cause?

Claimed my own marital right without concern for my spouse?

Deliberately caused male climax outside of normal sexual intercourse? (*Catechism*, 2366)

Wilfully entertained impure thoughts?

Purchased, viewed, or made use of pornography?

Watched movies and television that involve sex and nudity?

Listened to music or jokes that are harmful to purity?

Committed adultery? (Sexual relations with someone who is married, or with someone other than my spouse.)

Committed incest? (Sexual relations with a relative or in-law.)

Committed fornication? (Sexual relations with someone of the opposite sex when neither of us is married.)

Engaged in homosexual activity? (Sexual activity with someone of the same sex.)

Committed rape?

Masturbated? (Deliberate stimulation of one's own sexual organs for sexual pleasure.)

Engaged in sexual foreplay (petting) reserved for marriage?

Preyed upon children or youth for my sexual pleasure?

Engaged in unnatural sexual activities?

Engaged in prostitution, or paid for the services of a prostitute?

Seduced someone, or allowed myself to be seduced?

Made uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances toward another?

Purposely dressed immodestly?

Seventh & Tenth Commandments*You shall not steal.**You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.*

Have I...

Stolen? (Take something that doesn't belong to me against the reasonable will of the owner.)

Envied others on account of their possessions?

Tried to live in a spirit of Gospel poverty and simplicity?

Given generously to others in need?

Considered that God has provided me with money so that I might use it to benefit others, as well as for my own legitimate needs?

Freed myself from a consumer mentality?

Practiced the works of mercy?

Deliberately defaced, destroyed or lost another's property?

Cheated on a test, taxes, sports, games, or in business?

Squandered money in compulsive gambling?

Make a false claim to an insurance company?

Paid my employees a living wage, or failed to give a full day's work for a full day's pay?

Failed to honor my part of a contract?

Failed to make good on a debt?

Overcharge someone, especially to take advantage of another's hardship or ignorance?

Misused natural resources?