

Examination of Conscience

Duties to God and to Church:

- Do I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?
- Have I given God the honor and time that is His due?
- Do I pray?
- Do I express my gratitude to God?
- Does something or someone -- a material thing, a person, a behavior, an attitude -- come between me and God?
- Have I used God's Name as a curse word or cursed God?
- Have I broken promises, oaths, or vows to God?
- Have I failed to treat sacred things and places with respect?
- Have I received the Eucharist while not in a state of grace?
- Have I kept Sunday holy by attending Mass and refraining from servile work?
- Have I lied to a priest during the Sacrament of Penance or intentionally failed to confess a sin I should have confessed?
- Have I defended God and His Church when it was necessary?
- Do I study my faith, according to my abilities, so I can defend the Church when necessary?
- Do I study my faith, according to my abilities, so that I have a conscience that is true, good, and certain?
- Do I properly value the Church's disciplines and heritage?
- Do I pray for the Holy Father and the Church, including those in Purgatory?
- Have I experimented with magic, the occult, spiritism, willful psychic phenomena, ouija boards, etc.?
- Do I keep Sundays and Holy Days of obligation?
- Have I failed to go to Confession, at least once a year during Lent?
- Have I failed to do my Easter Duty (i.e., receive the Eucharist at least once during the Paschal Season)?
- Have I failed to follow the laws of fasting and abstinence?
- Have I failed to support the Church as my means allow?
- Have I obeyed the Church's marriage laws?
- Do I belong to a secret society such as Freemasonry, Skull and Bones, etc.?

Duties to Family:

- Have I failed to perform my duties to my parents, spouse, or children -- as (mother/ father, daughter/son, wife/husband) and as a Christian whose duty it is to lead them to Christ and to pray for them and, if possible, with them?
- For husbands: Do I treat my wife with the respect and tenderness I would give to Our Lady? Do I treat her as less than my queen, bride, and friend? Do I strive to provide for her, protect her, and help her to feel cherished and needed without condescension or treating her as a child? Do I undermine her in her role as mother? Do I try

to make her happy within the boundaries of God's laws? Do I express gratitude to her for what she does? Do I use my headship as an excuse for laziness, cruelty, arrogance, misogyny, or in any manner inconsistent with the way in which I would treat Our Lady or the manner in which Christ treats His Church? Do I try to please and fulfill her sexually?

- For wives: Do I treat my husband with less than the respect and tenderness I would give to Christ? Do I treat him as less than my king, groom, and friend? Do I strive to respect his headship, nurture him, and help him feel cherished and needed? Do I undermine him in his role as father? Do I try to make him happy within the boundaries of God's laws? Do I express gratitude to him for what he does? Do I nag or provoke him? Do I talk to him as if he's a child? Do I speak ill of him to others? Do I betray his privacy with my girlfriends or others, including "the internet"? Do I try to please and fulfill him sexually?
- Is Christ the King of my household?
- Do I pray for my dead ancestors, family members, and friends, and for the souls of those in Purgatory who have no one to pray for them?
- Have I helped cause members of my family to sin (by counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise or flattery, concealment, partaking, imprudent silence, or defense of the sin in question)?
- Do I try my best to empathize with the members of my family and to love them with a love grounded in Truth?
- Do the members of my family know they are loved? If not, is this my fault?
- Have I caused any member of my family to get unrighteously angry or to be unjustly hurt?
- Have I failed to apologize to and seek forgiveness from members of my family -- including children -- if there was need?
- Have I forgiven my parents, spouse or children for past faults?
- Do I respect my family members' privacy? (consider how you behave and what information you reveal on social media)
- Do I give my family my time and undivided attention when possible?
- Do any of my habits -- spending habits, gambling, etc. -- deprive my family of support?
- Have I used artificial contraception or otherwise failed to keep my marital acts open to life? Have I used N.F.P. (Natural Family Planning) for frivolous reasons?
- Am I too lenient with my children? Do I set high enough but not unreasonable standards and reasonable boundaries? Do I use fair, reasonable, and consistent discipline?
- Am I too harsh with my children? Do I squelch the joy out of my children's lives with needless rules, "Pharisaic" attitudes, a lack of mercy, and an authoritarian -- as opposed to an authoritative -- approach to discipline? Do I discipline them in a way that humiliates them?
- Are my spouse and I consistent and unified as a whole in our discipline of our children?
- Do my spouse and I sabotage each other with regard to disciplining our children? Do I "force" my spouse to play the role of "mean parent" while I play "fun parent"?
- Have I been a good example for my children and/or the children of others, especially in terms of how I treat others and honor God?
- Do I have high enough and age-appropriate expectations of my children?
- Do I over-praise or under-praise my children?
- Do I prize goodness and grace in my children above anything else I prize in them?
- Do I teach my children the fullness of the Faith, encourage them to pray to their Guardian Angels, to their patron Saints, for the dead, etc.?
- Do I inspire my children's imaginations, do all I can to encourage healthy curiosity and the ability to marvel by

teaching them about God, His Church, His creation, the lives of the Saints, etc., and by, to the best of my ability, exposing them to good books, music, art, museums, etc.?

- Have I found a good balance between protecting my child's innocence and teaching him about the world, in an age-appropriate way, so that he is not ignorant and naive or made to feel stupid or ridiculous about himself when in the company of others? Have I given him good weapons with which to resist the evils of the world while understanding and nourishing his social needs?
- Do I treat male children and female children with equal dignity and with respect for Natural Law and their God-given differences as male and female? On the other hand, am I too rigid about sex roles and ignore a given child's *individual* gifts, talents, sensitivities, or callings because they aren't stereotypical or average in terms of his sex (within the bounds of sane social order)?
- Do I allow my children appropriate expression of their emotions and help them to understand and become masters of their negative emotions?
- Do I help my children come to a humble, healthy, true sense of themselves as children of God, as individuals with unique vocations, and as possessing both virtues and faults?
- Do I instill in my children a sense of duty to God, to family, to others, and to themselves?
- Do I nurture the possibility of religious or priestly vocations in any of my children who seem to possibly have such vocations?
- Have I taught my children good manners and to be aware of the needs and feelings of others? Have I taught them to be especially courteous to the elderly, the infirm, the pregnant, and the otherwise challenged?

Duties to Society:

- Do I love others as I love myself, with a love grounded in Truth?
- Do I evangelize with prudence and intelligence, and without being annoying, nagging, or judgmental?
- Do I pray for others, including for the dead, for those in authority and for my enemies?
- Have I taken anything I had no right to take? Have I failed to return anything I may have stolen in the past or otherwise make restitution?
- Have I cheated anyone out of anything that is rightfully theirs?
- Have I been honest in business, including paying my employees a fair wage?
- Do I treat my employees or those I supervise with dignity, respect, and consideration? ~and/or~ Do I give my employer his due and perform my job as best as I can?
- Do I treat service personnel (waitresses, waiters, clerks, busboys, maids, doormen, etc.) with dignity, respect, and consideration, and without condescension? Do I consider their time and feelings? Do I tip well, given my means, in cultures where tipping is considered the norm and, in essence, "wages"?
- Have I engaged in or do I condone illicit usury?
- Have I given to the poor as my means allow?
- Do I act as if I've been given the authority to judge others' souls?
- When engaging in fraternal correction, do I do so in the right way? (see "Conversion of the Heart" for more information)
- Have I participated in the sins of others by counseling them to sin, by commandmanding them to sin, by consenting to their sin, by provoking them to sin, by praising or flattering them in their sins, by concealing their sins that others have a right to know about, by partaking in their sins, or by silence even when the cause of charity demands I speak out?
- Do I give others the benefit of the doubt whenever possible?

- Do I impugn the motives of others, assuming the worst intentions with no evidence?
- Do I love the sinner while remaining truthful about sin?
- Am I forgiving to the contrite?
- Have I nurtured unrighteous anger in my heart?
- Am I vengeful?
- Am I a good, reliable friend to others?
- Have I spoken anything untrue about another (calumny or slander)? Have I, for no *good* reason, said things that were true but were also damaging to another's reputation (detraction)?
- Do I engage in malicious gossip?
- Do I betray others' secrets that I had no right to betray?
- Do I make promises I do not intend to keep?
- Have I cheated on tests or homework at school or otherwise plagiarized the work of others?
- Am I greedy and selfish?
- Am I envious of what others have?
- Am I too materialistic?
- Have I cursed another (i.e., called down physical or moral evil on a rational creature, not for the sake of a good, such as justice or punishment, but out of malice or for personal gain)?
- If possible, if candidates are available, do I vote responsibly, with the Kingship of Christ, the dignity of human life, and the principle of subsidiarity in mind?
- Given my station in life, my gifts, and vocation, do I care enough for the sick, hungry, thirsty, poor, and imprisoned?
- Do I show good stewardship by treating the earth as God's creation? Am I careful to not litter or pollute the earth or waste resources?
- Do I treat animals with care and appreciation and refrain from needless cruelty toward them? Do I go too far in the other direction and condone treating animals as if they're as beloved by God as human beings who are made in His Image and Likeness, as if they have or should have rights (as opposed to our having duties toward them which include treating them with great dignity and compassion and not allowing their enduring any needless suffering, etc.)?
- Do I show reasonable patriotism for my country (that is "country," not necessarily "government," and doesn't mean "blind patriotism")?
- Do I use my God-given talents in a wholesome way and for the benefit of others?
- Am I mindful of how my behavior or passivity influences others and conditions around me?
- Are there things I should have done but failed to do? Are there things I should have said but failed to say?
- Do I exhibit any thoughts or behaviors rooted in the idea that God's and our love for others is or should be conditioned by ideas of race or genetics? Do I treat all persons with dignity and charity no matter their ethnicity, race, religion, or sexual persuasion?
- Have I murdered anyone, including having an abortion, helping someone have an abortion, or failing to do my best to encourage someone *not* to have an abortion (abortion includes in vitro fertilization)? Have I participated in or encouraged euthanasia? Have I encouraged embryonic stem cell research? Have I encouraged unjust war?
- Have I intentionally and unjustly physically harmed someone?
- Have I used alcohol or any other drug recreationally to to the point where my judgment and will were affected?

- Have I been chaste according to my station in life (been faithful to my spouse, honored promises or vows as a religious or priest, not engaged in fornication or other sexual acts if unmarried, etc.)?
- Have I willfully looked at pornography for no legitimate reason (e.g. law-enforcement) or supported it financially?
- Do I dress and behave modestly and with concern for how my appearance and behavior may lead others to the sin of lust?
- Have I engaged in solitary sexual sins (i.e., masturbation)?
- Have I *intentionally* lusted after someone? (Note: random thoughts that come to mind unbidden are not sinful. They should be treated as mere flies that should be shooed away. What is sinful is *deliberately* cultivating these thoughts, *deliberately* giving them your salacious attention, etc. Know that many great Saints had thoughts like these -- and even worse: it is quite common as one proceeds in holiness for extremely *blasphemous* thoughts and thoughts of *despair* to flash in the mind. Shoo them away, distract yourself from them, and know that it is the Evil One trying to make you feel hopeless. It is good at times like these to call on the Holy Name of Jesus and fall back on the short aspirations to replace those thoughts with holy ones.)
- Have I engaged in homosexual or lesbian acts?
- Have I been kind and charitable to those who are struggling to overcome homosexual or lesbian temptations? Do I engage in name-calling, scapegoating, gossip, or making assumptions about those who suffer from same sex attraction? From another angle, do I have such a soft heart for homosexuals that I am unwilling to speak out against acting on homosexual desires, or against gay "marriage," etc., when the time calls for it?
- Do I treat those who are suffering from gender dysphoria with compassion and love, refraining from name-calling, gossip, bullying, etc.?

Duties to Yourself:

- Do I trust in God's mercy and love for me as a beloved child, or do I wallow in guilt for sins I've been absolved of?
- Am I too scrupulous and hard on myself, treating myself much more harshly than I would others I love?
- Am I too easy on myself?
- Am I honest with myself about my gifts and limitations?
- Do I overestimate or underestimate my importance?
- Do I treat myself as an icon of God, made in His image?
- Do I trust that God is in control or do I worry needlessly?
- Am I able to appreciate the fruits of His Goodness?
- Do I stand up for myself and my wholesome needs?
- Do I feel guilty for simply having negative *feelings*?
- Do I treat my body with care, try to eat well enough, sleep enough, etc.?
- Do I have a good sense of humor? Does that humor apply to myself? Am I able to laugh, especially at myself?