

Examination of Conscience found in the Rite of Penance, Appendix III

What is my attitude to the sacrament of penance? Do I sincerely want to be set free from sin, to turn again to God, to begin a new life, and to enter into a deeper friendship with God? Or do I look on it as a burden, to be undertaken as seldom as possible? In past confessions, did I forget to mention, or deliberately conceal, any grave sins? Did I perform the penance I was given in my last confession? Did I make reparation for any injury to others? Have I tried to put into practice my resolution to lead a better life in keeping the Gospel?

Questions related to the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart."

Is my heart set on God, so that I really love him above all things and am faithful to his commandments, as a child loves and obeys parents? Or am I more concerned about the things of this world? Have I a right intention in what I do, seeking above all to fulfill the will of God? God spoke to us in his Son. Is my faith in God firm and secure? Am I wholehearted in accepting the Church's teaching? Have I been careful to grow in my understanding of the faith, to hear God's word, to study the doctrine of the Church, to avoid dangers to faith? Have I been strong and fearless in professing my faith in God and the Church? Am I consistent with the faith in public and private life? Have I prayed morning and evening? When I pray, do I really raise my mind and heart to God or is it a matter of words only? Do I offer God my difficulties, my joys, and my sorrows? Do I turn to God in time of temptation? Do I have love and reverence for God's name? Have I offended him by blasphemy, swearing falsely, or taking his name in vain? Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints? Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days--or caused others to do so--through my own fault? Have I participated in Mass with attention and devotion? Have I fulfilled the precept of annual confession and of communion during the Easter season? Are there "false gods" in my life: superstition, spiritism or other occult practices; money or other things, human ambitions or even persons that mean more to me than God does?

Questions related to the commandment of a right love of self and the love of neighbor: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"

Where is my life leading me? Is the hope of eternal life my inspiration? Am I really trying to grow in a spiritual life through prayer, reading the word of God and meditating on it, receiving the sacraments, self-denial and acceptance of the sorrows and disappointments of life for the love of Christ? Have I kept the precept of fasting and abstinence? Have I strived to control my vices, my bad inclinations and passions, e.g. envy, love of food and drink? Have I fought especially against self-love or have I been proud and boastful, thinking myself better in the sight of God and despising others as less important than myself? Have I imposed my own will on others, without respecting their freedom and rights? What use have I made of time, of health and strength, of the gifts God has given me, like the talents of the Gospel? Do I use them for the glory of God and the good of others and my true good? Do I use them fully, or have I been lazy and too much given to leisure? Do I have a genuine love for my neighbors? Or do I use others for my own ends, or do to them what I would not want done to myself? Have I given grave scandal by my words or actions?

In my family life, have I contributed to the well-being and happiness of the others by patience and genuine love? Have I been obedient to parents, showing them proper respect and giving them help in their spiritual and material needs? Have I been careful to give a Christian upbringing to my children, and to help them by good example and by exercising authority as a parent? Have I been faithful to my husband (wife) in my heart and in my relations with others? Do I share my possessions with the less fortunate? Do I do my best to help the victims of oppression, misfortune, and poverty? Or do I look down on my neighbor, especially the poor, the sick, the elderly, strangers, and people of other races? Does my life reflect the mission I received in confirmation? Do I share in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and in the life of my parish? Have I helped to meet the needs of the Church and of the world and prayed for them: for unity in the Church, for the spread of the Gospel among nations, for peace and justice, etc.?

Am I concerned for the good and prosperity of the human community in which I live, or do I spend my life caring only for myself? Do I share to the best of my ability in the work of promoting justice, morality, harmony, and love in human relations? Have I done my duty as a citizen? Have I paid my taxes? In my work or profession am I just, hardworking, honest, serving society out of love of others? Have I paid a fair wage to my employees? Have I been faithful to my promises and contracts? Have I obeyed legitimate authority and given it due respect? If I am in a position of responsibility or authority, do I use this for my own advantage or for the good of others, in a spirit of service? Have I done violence to others by damage to life or limb, reputation, honor or material possessions? Have I been responsible for advising an abortion or procuring one? Have I been involved in permitting or encouraging the breakdown of matrimony and its integrity through artificial fertilization? Have I kept up hatred for others? Am I estranged from others through quarrels, enmity, insults, anger? Have I been guilty of refusing to testify to the innocence of another because of selfishness?

Have I kept my senses and my whole body pure and chaste as a temple of the Holy Spirit, consecrated for resurrection and glory, and in order to have the self-mastery and selfless love required to live out my vocation in life? Have I dishonored my body by fornication, impurity, unworthy conversation or thoughts, evil desires, or actions? Have I given in to sensuality? Have I indulged in reading, conversation, shows, and entertainments that offend against Christian and human decency? Have I encouraged others to sin by my own failure to maintain these standards? Have I been faithful to the moral law in my married life? Am I guilty of the sin of contraception? Have I been truthful and fair, or have I injured others by deceit, calumny, detraction, rash judgment, or violation of a secret? Have I stolen the property of others? Have I desired it unjustly and inordinately? Have I damaged it? Have I made restitution of other people's property and made good their loss? If I have been injured, have I been ready to make peace for the love of Christ and to forgive, or do I harbor hatred and the desire for revenge?