

A SELF-EXAMINATION
IN PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

Try and be as practical as you can in making your list of sins in preparation for confession. To think concretely. To think about what several sins may have been involved in a single act. Be sure to distinguish *proclivities* and *temptations* to sin, from actual acts of sin (acts which may be mental or physical). If there is ambiguity, feel free to raise that ambiguity with the confessor by letting him know you are not sure if a sin has been committed.

One final note, when compiling a list of one's sins, it is useful to try and name about how many times (since your last confession, or, if it is your first confession: In your whole life) a specific sin has been committed. This way you can see for yourself which pits you are prone to falling into, and also consider what things in your life could be changed to help try and avoid these sins. Furthermore, it is an additional act of humility to recognize and name just how much one has been sinning, and is a sinner. It hurts a little, but, it is good for your soul. Trust the wisdom of the Ancient Church on this, and trust in the mercy of our Lord Jesus who is always ready to forgive us, when we turn to him.

This is a good prayer to be said before self-examination:

O HOLY SPIRIT, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding, and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before thy judgment seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the living Heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pause at each question, and reflect

FIRST COMMANDMENT

Have no other gods but the LORD

Have you:

Prayed to any god other than the God revealed in the Scriptures
who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Worshiped alongside non-Christians?

Willfully loved any person more than God?

Feared the opinions of people, more than the opinion of God?

Neglected God in daily life?

Denied God in the presence of other people?

Concealed my faith?

Made light of my sin?

Made light of the sins of others?

Refused to believe the basic teachings of the Church?

Followed your own will when God showed you to do other wise?

Complained that God has neglected or been to harsh with you?

Despaired of salvation in Jesus?

Refused to admit your faults before God?

Failed to forgive another?

Been satisfied with religious routine, rather than true worship?

Attempted to bribe or placate God?

Engaged in superstitious behavior?

Consulted mediums, palm-readers, horoscopes, etc?

Have you put your hope in "luck"?

SECOND COMMANDMENT

Worship no Idols

Have you:

Honored the idols of other religions: Statues of the buddha, etc.?

Treated Christian objects in a superstitious way?

Sought the good favor of the saints instead of appealing to Christ?

Believed in any doctrine contrary to the teaching of Christianity?

THE IDOL OF MAMMON

- Been excited by money? Worried about money?
- Devoted too much attention to money matters?

THE IDOL OF THE FLESH

- Been excited by worldly honor, admiration or prestige?
- Sought my own pleasure as an end in itself?
- Sought to cushion my life in luxury? or been Gluttonous?
- Been dainty, or self-indulgent in food or dress?
- Gotten drunk? (anything more than 2 drinks in one setting would be good to question oneself about)
- Used drugs (legal or illegal) that alter the senses or one's mood?
- Shown too much concern over your appearance or dress?
- Deliberate slovenliness?
- Been cowardly in sickness?
- Spoken with vanity to others about your own life or possessions?
- Been snobbish and superior about race, education, class, title, etc.?

THE IDOL OF SELF

- Been self-reliant in daily life?
- Relied on self for your own moral reform?
- Been self-righteous before God? Been self-righteous before others?
- Paraded your Christian practices in front of others?
- Boasted? Exaggerated?
- Drawn attention to ones' self? Talked too much?
- Offered your own opinions without being asked?
- Relished compliments?
- Been anxious about your life?
- Been quick to take offense from others?
- Been argumentative?
- Refused to apologize when in the wrong?
- Avoided duties that are part of your station in life? (As a parent, child, spouse, worker?)
- Indulged self-pity?
- Disobeyed the laws of the Land?
- Betrayed the trust of another?
- Tried to assert your authority over another?

THIRD COMMANDMENT

Do not take the Lord's name in vain

Have you:

Used God's name flippantly, in any context other than an address of prayer
(e.g. "Oh my God!" as an exclamation of surprise or anger?)

Taken an oath in the name of God rashly?

Sworn to something that is sinful or untrue?

Violated any oaths you have made?

Have you claimed God's will as your reason for doing something selfish
or wicked?

Studied theology for the wrong reasons (to win an argument, etc.)?

Deliberately concealed a sin in confession?

Neglected duty to family in the name of Church work?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath and Keep it Holy

Have you:

Omitted to attend Church when able?

Been absent-minded when in Church?

Gone for entertainment or sports instead of Church?

Omitted to set aside a portion of each day for prayer?

Failed to do penances previously given?

Failed to take some rest from work on one day in seven?

Put off work until Sunday that reasonably could have been done beforehand?

Failed to set aside any time for godly rest and recreation?

Sacrificed sleep in order to merely obtain wealth?

Not honored the fast days of the church?

Honored worldly festivals more than God's festivals? (e.g. Shopping
instead of going to Christmas service, etc.)

Dishonored holy feasts by drunkenness or gluttony?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Honor father and mother

If you are still under their charge:

Have you obeyed your mother and father in all things not clearly contrary to God's will?

If you are not under their charge:

Have you still sought to honor your parents?

Have you:

Brought shame or scandal to your family by immoral actions?

Attended to the needs of your parents in old age?

Been respectful to those God has placed over you?

Deceived those over you? Have you spoken ill of them?

Honored the clergy, especially those in the church you attend?

Spoken ill of an ordained minister to others in the congregation?

Deserted a woman that you got pregnant?

Neglected your duties as a father and mother?

Behaved more as a confidant than a parent to your child?

Neglected to discipline children?

Neglected to teach children (or those in your care) about God and his saving work in Jesus Christ?

Neglected to provide for the reasonable needs and wishes of your spouse?

Spoken maliciously of government officials?

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Do not murder

Have you:

Murdered another?

Had an abortion? Encouraged another to get an abortion?

Encouraged any form of euthanasia for the elderly?

Desired your own death? Attempted suicide?

Abused anyone? (Verbally, Physically, or otherwise?)

Been too harsh in disciplining a child?

Gotten into physical fights? Used violent language or threats?

Indulged violent thoughts about someone?

Driven a vehicle recklessly?

Been nit-picky with family members? Been quarrelsome?
Hated anyone? Cursed anyone? Been angry at anyone without a cause?
Been irritable? Insulted anyone? Gossiped?
Ruined another's reputation unjustly?
Harbored a grudge against anyone?
Been revengeful?
Set a sinful example for someone, that led them into sin?
Been cruel to animals?

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Do not commit adultery

Have you:

Had sex before marriage?

Had sex with anyone besides your spouse after marriage?

Engaged in any sexually-arousing activity before or outside of marriage?

Within the context of marriage:

Sought sex for your pleasure alone, without considering the
needs and desires of your spouse?

Been forceful in obtaining sex from your spouse?

Used sex as a means to merely attain one's own ends?

Done anything un-natural or violent with your spouse?

Looked at pornography? Read lewd novels?

Indulged sexual fantasies in your mind?

Gone to any restaurants, venues, or dances in order to be aroused?

Touched yourself impurely?

Sought to arouse any one besides your spouse?

Encouraged any one else toward adultery?

Stared at someone's body in public?

Told dirty jokes? Laughed at dirty jokes?

Watched movies or television shows with the intention of being aroused
by them?

Been immodest in conversation?

Been prudish by speaking of all sexuality as "evil" or "unclean"?

Prevented the bringing forth of children for selfish motives?

Used artificial contraception without grave reason for doing so?

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Do not steal

Have you:

Stolen anything from a store?

Taken something without asking that did not belong to you?

Failed to return something that was borrowed?

Downloaded or bought pirated software, music, movies, etc.?

Shared in goods that you know were stolen by someone else?

Taken on more debt than was wise in light of your income?

Deliberately dodged debts? Cheated in business?

Cheated on your taxes?

Been stingy?

Found anything of value and not sought to locate its rightful owner?

Willfully wasted time “on the clock” at work?

Written off as business expenses what really weren't so?

Violated a business contract? Wasted natural resources?

Spent too much money on things of no eternal value?

Destroyed the property of others?

Marked up the price of goods or services more than is fair?

Been overly exacting in others' repayment of their debts to you?

Failed to give some money, time, or services to the care of the poor?

Been begrudging when doing so?

NINTH COMMANDMENT

Do not bear false witness

Have you:

Spoken ill of someone to another? Been two-faced?

Been over eager to believe ill of someone?

Lied about something? Concealed the truth?

Lied for someone else? Lied about your self?

Lied about your abilities, experiences, talents, etc.?

Spoken one thing to others, but done otherwise yourself?

Been harsh toward others for sins that you have also committed?

Told secrets that others had trusted you with?

TENTH COMMANDMENT

Do not covet

Have you:

Neglected to give thanks to God for what he has given?

Been jealous of others for what they have?

Been bitter about the good fortune of others?

Been glad when someone else has failed?

Gloated over another? Shown favoritism?

Been dis-satisfied with the station God has placed you in?

Desired more ease and enjoyment from life?

Gambled more money than you could afford to lose?

Sought one's entertainment chiefly in gambling?

Played the lottery out of distrust that God will provide for your needs?

Surrendered to feelings of depression and gloom?

Used another as means of gain for oneself?

Lived beyond one's means in order to "keep up with the Joneses"?

Not given a meaningful portion of one's wages to the Church (tithe)?

Been uncooperative so as to spoil another's plans?

Paid employees unfairly?

Obstructed the justice system?

PRAYER THAT CAN BE USED AFTER SELF-EXAMINATION

O MY GOD, how great are my sins! I wish that I had never offended your glory in these ways. Give me a true sorrow and a contrite heart for my many sins. Help me to make a true confession to your priest, so that I may receive perfect remission of my sins, by the merit and power of Jesus Christ, who gave himself up as an offering and a sacrifice for them. Amen.