

An Examination of Conscience based on the Seven Capital Sins

THE SIN OF ANGER

- *Have I held onto grudges and resentments from the past?*
- *Have I used vulgar language when I am mad? Have I said things I regret in the midst of anger?*
- *Have I hurt another person (spouse, child, parent, friend, co-worker, or stranger), either physically or verbally, in my anger?*
- *Does my anger over situations in life lead me to be mean? To gossip? To backbiting?*
- *Do I drive in a way that leads to an increase in my own anger OR causes others to be angry with me?*
- *Does my anger lead to prejudicial or racial attitudes or comments?*
- *Have I had an abortion or encouraged someone to have an abortion?*

THE SIN OF GREED

- *Do I live a “simple” lifestyle? Do I support my parish community (tithe)?*
- *Do I want more than I need? Do I hate it when others have more than me?*
- *Do I use others to get what I want? Do I try to help others in need (family, friends, the poor)?*
- *Do I have an unhealthy attachment to my possessions? Do I “accumulate” things?*
- *Do I become annoying when I don’t get what I want?*

THE SIN OF GLUTTONY

- *Do I put my own needs ahead of those entrusted to me care?*
- *Do I feel that everything has to be done “my way”?*
- *Have I overindulged/abused food, drink, tobacco, or other comforts? Why?*
- *Do I buy things I do not need to fill a void in my life? Do I “hoard” stuff?*

THE SIN OF JEALOUSY

- *Am I jealous of the advancement, recognition, or honor given to others (at work, school or in my family)? Do I appreciate the talents of others?*
- *Am I willing to serve others without the expectation of reward or recognition?*
- *Has my jealousy led me to steal things from others?*
- *Has jealousy led to slandering other people’s reputations?*

THE SIN OF LUST

- *Have I been unfaithful to my marriage vows in thought or action?*
- *If unmarried, have I been sexually active with another? Do I entertain or dwell on impure thoughts?*
- *Do I flirt with others at work or in social situation in an inappropriate manner?*
- *Do I enjoy sexually suggestive talk, humor, or movies?*
- *Do I view pornography or visit sexually charged internet sites or chat rooms? Have I masturbated?*
- *Do I engage in lewd or provocative talk with others?*

THE SIN OF LAZINESS

- *Do I make time for prayer each day? Mass each Sunday?*
- *Do I make time for my spouse? My children? My friends? Myself?*
- *Am I an honest employee – putting in an honest days work?*
- *Do I do what I am asked to do? Do I keep promises?*
- *Do I use TV, video games, the internet, sports, or other hobbies to avoid my responsibilities?*
- *Do I use the talents and gifts I have received to make the world a better place?*

THE SIN OF PRIDE

- *Do I think before I speak? Do I “show off” in an attempt to impress people?*
- *Am I obedient to the law? Parents? Supervisors? The Church?*
- *Do I acknowledge that all I have is a gift from God?*
- *Do I think I am better than others? Do I look down on people?*
- *Do I think of others (their needs and feelings) when I am making a decision?*
- *Do I feel I have to be consulted on everything that happens in my home or at work?*
- *Am I honest in my dealings with people? Do I tell lies?*
- *Do I spend too much time worrying about my appearance?*

HOW DO I GO TO CONFESSION

1. Prayerfully prepare yourself by examining your conscience (thinking about your own sins). Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in this time of prayer.
2. Choose which priest you will celebrate the sacrament with; it is your decision. You will also need to decide if you want to go “face to face” where the priest will see you or “behind the screen” where you will be anonymous. It is your decision.
3. The priest will greet you. He may pray “In the name the Father, and of the Son...”
4. He may offer a few words to help you enter into this time of grace and mercy. Remember, it is more about God’s mercy than it is about your sins.
5. Tell him: ***this is my first confession***. In the future, you will tell him how long it has been since you went to confession (this helps the priest put things in context).
6. Tell the priest your sins. Why? Because this is the way Jesus set things up. Yes, this can be “awkward” in some ways, but not if we see the priest as our spiritual father, there to share with us his grace and love.
 - a. You can bring your examination of conscience paper with you to help remember your sins (if you go “into the box” it might be dark – remember!
 - b. In the case of Mortal Sins (very serious, you knew what you were doing and you made the choice to do it freely), you need to confess “how many times” it was committed.
 - c. In the case of other sins, you can give a general sense of things (a few times, often, daily)
 - d. You do not need to offer “the details” of the sin or the reason or the names of those involved. Just the sin. No excuse or justification is needed. It is wrong. You know it is wrong.
 - e. In the end, tell the priest, “***that is all***”
7. The priest will offer some brief comments and insights for you, perhaps suggesting ways to grow in your relationship with the Lord. Listen, God uses the priest in this moment of grace.
8. The priest will give you “a penance” which is a prayer or act of charity to begin the process of healing the damage caused by sin in your life. You will “do your penance” when you leave the confessional.
9. He may ask you to make an Act of Contrition. Say: ***Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner.***
10. The priest will “absolve you” of your sins. When he makes the cross, you make the cross on yourself.
11. He will end by saying: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. You say: ***His mercy endures forever.***
12. Go back to the Church and pray for a few minutes. Enjoy the grace of new life!