

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Used at the GREATER CINCINNATI CATHOLIC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, 4 March
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Taken from two sources: www.beginningcatholic.com and www.blessedishe.net (Blessed is She (BIS) Lenten
Examination of Conscience for Women)

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?
- 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

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 business unnecessarily on Sunday or other Holy Days of Obligation?
- Not attended

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 to taking my children to Mass?
- Knowingly ate meat on a forbidden day (or not fasting on a fast day)?
- Ate

 or drank 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*)
- Willfully 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? (taken 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?
- Overcharged d someone, especially to take advantage of another's hardship or ignorance?

- Misused natural resources?

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? (**d**estroying a person's reputation by telling others about his faults for no good reason)
- Committed slander or calumny? (**t**elling lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation)
- Committed libel? (**w**riting lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation)
- Been guilty of rash judgment? (**a**ssuming 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 **a**t 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)

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?

This detailed Catholic examination of conscience should help you reflect on how you are responding to the demands made by the love of God.

Blessed Is She (second source)

Here you will find all the daily examination of conscience questions divided into three root sins: Pride, Vanity and Sensuality.

Sins of pride are the ones where we seek meaning in our own perceived "successes." We puff our selves up and wrest power away from God. The sins clustered under 'vanity' are those rooted in a disordered attachment to the world's affirmation and applause. The sins listed under 'sensuality' are those sins that seek pleasure, ease and comfort, particularly of the flesh.

Of course, excellent achievements and human interaction and pleasure are not sins. Making idols of them is a sin. The meaning in our lives should not come from attachments to anything other than God. These questions, gathered this way, are intended to help you prepare for Confession so that disordered attachments and the things they compel us to do can be forgiven and we can move forward in grace, with God at the center of our lives.

PRIDE

- ❖ Do I try to figure out a problem on my own, forgetting to ask God for His direction before attempting to discern the path forward?
- ❖ Do I think more of book smarts than I do of knowledge of the nature of God?
- ❖ Am I puffed up by accolades of this world; do I set my goals according to what lofty award or promotion or grad school admission I want to attain, failing to discern if those are God's goals for me?
- ❖ Do I worry excessively, and fail to hand over my fears to God?
- ❖ When I perform good works, am I offering them to God or doing them because I think I can earn heaven?
- ❖ Do I do good works because they make me feel better about myself?
- ❖ Do I fail to offer God all the little details of my life and do I stubbornly hold onto some illusion of control?
- ❖ Do I fail to pray about the little details?
- ❖ Do I despair in my sins and beat myself up for imperfection, forgetting that I am the dearly loved child of God and He has died to save me from my wretchedness?
- ❖ Has my pride kept me from Confession?
- ❖ Do I fall prey to the lie that I don't need friends, don't need companions on a Christian journey?
- ❖ Do I criticize harshly or without mercy?
- ❖ Do I dismiss other people as beneath me, not worth my time or attention or friendship, because I think that I am exalted above them?
- ❖ Am I quick to judge other people and find them lacking?
- ❖ Do I make quick, critical assessments of others without considering them with empathy?
- ❖ Do I genuinely believe that I am rarely wrong?
- ❖ Do I cower and weep or lash out in anger at the suggestion I could be wrong?
- ❖ Do I withhold an apology because I think it weakens me?
- ❖ Do I miss the cues that I have hurt someone else because I'm too preoccupied with myself?

- ❖ Do I fail to spend my Sundays genuinely worshipping and resting?
- ❖ Do I despair, thinking that I will never truly conquer sin, never grow in holiness?
- ❖ Am I prioritizing my life according to God's will?
- ❖ Am I confused about which responsibilities are mine and which are God's?
- ❖ Do I slow down and trust that God will provide everything I need?
- ❖ In my anger, have I sinned against the dignity of another person?
- ❖ Do I consider someone worth my time and attention only when he or she meets a certain social or economic criteria?
- ❖ Do I dishonor God by devaluing the gifts He's given to me?
- ❖ Do I seek acclamation and affirmation for my gifts, forgetting that they were freely given and not at all earned?
- ❖ Have I failed to apologize promptly, stubbornly digging into my own self-righteousness and sacrificing genuine reconciliation?
- ❖ Have I apologized insincerely, shifting the responsibility from my own failings and blaming the hurt on the victim of my sins?

VANITY

- ❖ Do I spend more time on social media than I do in the Word of God?
- ❖ Do I fail to speak up in the presence of injustice?
- ❖ Am I shy about living the seamless life of a committed Christian for all the world to see, no matter where I am?
- ❖ Did I lose my patience because I think what I am doing is more important than the person who interrupts me?
- ❖ Do I judge myself according to the false standards of this fallen world, striving for status or wealth or fame or outward beauty?
- ❖ Do I think what the crowd thinks or even what just one person thinks is more important than what God thinks? Do I act like I do?
- ❖ Am I a person pleaser who tires too hard to make everyone like me to the detriment of my own self-worth?
- ❖ Do I pretend to be a devout Christian, all the while sinning silently in my head?
- ❖ Do I demand attention, always seeking the spotlight?
- ❖ Do I thrive on drama, so I create it in order to sustain the attention of those around me?
- ❖ Do I recount my faults to others in order to have them reassure me that I am good?
- ❖ Is defensiveness my first reaction to criticism?
- ❖ Do I live in a false paradigm of cliques and exclusivity to the detriment of knowing and loving all the people God intends for me?
- ❖ Do I neglect quiet time with God because I am agreeing to do things that fill me with worldly pleasure or acclamation?
- ❖ Do I withhold hospitality because I think I have to 'entertain' in a perfect household?
- ❖ Am I living according to the world's economy or God's?
- ❖ Do I miss my own gifts because I am so focused on comparing them to other people's gifts?
- ❖ Do I use people for my own gain? (Take a serious look at the people in your life. Which ones are there because you think you can get something from them?)
- ❖ Do I resent others for the gifts that they have that I don't?
- ❖ Do I make a false witness of my life because I am not honest and sincere about who I really am?
- ❖ Do I lie, even just a little?

- ❖ Have I dug up old offenses and opened old wounds in the heat of argument?
- ❖ Have I ever apologized for something about which I was not sorry or I had not fault, only because I wanted to gain the false peace that come with avoiding conflict?
- ❖ Have I made other people the butt of my jokes?
- ❖ Have I couched gossip in the words of a 'prayer' request thereby exposing someone else to the scrutiny of others?
- ❖ Have I spoken untruths about someone or spread stories whose truth I do not know?
- ❖ Have I spoken things, which are true, but which damage the reputation of another and are better left unsaid?
- ❖ Am I a backbiter, speaking ill of one member of my family or community to another?
- ❖ Have I spoken poorly of my spouse, either to my children or to someone outside my family's circle?

SENSUALITY

- ❖ Do I fail to give my full attention to people when they are talking to me?
- ❖ Do I spend more time doing good things, which make me feel like a good person than I do getting to know the heart of the good God?
- ❖ Do I fail to share my faith boldly?
- ❖ Do I fail to notice the need around me because I am so focused on myself?
- ❖ Do I miss Mass because I've filled the rest of the week so full that I'm too tired to get out of bed on Sunday morning?
- ❖ Do I miss Mass because the weekend schedule crowds it out?
- ❖ Do I worry too much about 'wasting' time and so work needlessly on Sundays, forgetting that God is the master of time and He has commanded me to rest?
- ❖ Do I grumble and complain about the duties of this life and lose sight of the blessing of work?
- ❖ Do I spend too much time in front of screens?
 - Honestly, how much time do I spend mindlessly clicking around, in search of something to fill my cravings, missing that what I really crave is God?
- ❖ If I am married:
 - Is my love life-giving? Is it open to new life, to conception? Is it open to life for my partner, tender and selfless?
 - Am I manipulative? Do I use sex to get what I want?
 - Do I bring impure thoughts into my mind and in doing so, into my marriage?
 - Have I misused the gift of my sexuality through infidelity, masturbation or pornography?
- ❖ If I am not married:
 - Is my love life-giving? Or is it self-serving and seeks to own the other person rather than appreciate them for the unique gift they are?
 - Am I impatient in love? Unwilling to practice self-control in romantic relationships?
 - Have I misused the gift of my sexuality through masturbation or pornography?
- ❖ Do I spend too much time at my job because I don't want to face the work of personal relationships?
- ❖ Do I favor one of my children (or siblings or parents) over another with my time and attention just because it's easier?
- ❖ Do I fail to give God quality time of still, focused attention every day?

- ❖ Do I fail to listen carefully to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and ask Him to show me how to sanctify my daily routine?
- ❖ Do I let ingratitude or irritation erode my awareness of God's gracious provision?
- ❖ Am I attached to things of this world and do I make idols of them, prioritizing my life so that I don't have to be without them?
- ❖ Do I recognize my complete need for Christ and the way that I can be content in Him, regardless of the creature comforts of my surroundings?
- ❖ Have I complained about one child to another?
- ❖ In my anger, have I lost my temper?
- ❖ Do I miss the point that all that I have belongs to God for the purpose of extending His love, and so I am miserly with my possessions?
- ❖ Do I hold back in meeting a need because I'm afraid I won't have enough left for me?
- ❖ Do I hesitate to invite someone in when I could provide food or shelter or comfort or companionship because it requires work and some bother?
- ❖ Do I have a right spirit about fasting? Do I wear sackcloth and ashes and moan and complain or do I embrace sacrifice as a way to become more Christ-like?
- ❖ Am I attached to things of this world and do I make idols of them, prioritizing my life, so that I don't have to be without them?
- ❖ Have I failed to seize all the little opportunities Jesus has offered in my everyday life in an ordinary world to love my neighbor by being His hands and feet?