

Examination of Conscience

Prior to celebrating the sacrament of Penance, go to a quiet place and reflect upon your life using the following prompts. Journal your responses and take them with you to the confessional.

I. The Lord says: "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart."

Do I keep God in mind and put God first in my life. Or am I too caught up in material concerns?

Do I worship God regularly?

Do I respect God's name or have I dishonored it by using it in anger and carelessness?

Do I pray even when I don't feel like it?

Do I trust God and take seriously enough God's personal love and concern for me?

Do I genuinely repent of my sins and accept God's free and gracious forgiveness?

II. The Lord says: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Do I love my parents, brothers & sisters and try to create a happy home life? Or am I sometimes thoughtless or even cruel toward them?

Am I fair and honest in my relationships? Or do I sometimes lie or act phony, or take unfair advantage of others by cheating or stealing?

Do I respect the rights and sensitivities of others? Or do I tend to put people in categories or ignore them because they are different?

Do I honestly try to forgive people who dislike me? Or have I tried to hurt them by what I've said or done?

Am I grateful for my sexuality and anxious to grow in sexual maturity and responsibility? Or do I sometimes exploit members of the opposite sex and use their bodies as playthings?

Am I trying to improve the quality of life around me? Or do I foul up the environment and waste the good things I have?

Do I really care about my country and the good of the community of which I am a part? Or do I care only about myself and the people I know?

Am I concerned for the poor, the hungry and destitute and for the millions who thirst for justice and peace?

Can I cut back on excessive eating and drinking and contribute to the poor of the world?

III. Jesus says: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Am I working at becoming a better person and a better Christian?

Am I making the most of my talents, my education and my opportunities? Or do I fail to use them sometimes?

Do I place knowledge above grades?

Do I take care of my body, and make sure I get enough sleep and exercise?

Do I sometimes eat and drink far too much or misuse my body sexually?

Am I able to admit my own need for help and to ask for it?

Do I accept myself, despite my limitations and weakness?

What is the fundamental orientation of my life toward God or away from God?

"To sin is to break a bond, to destroy a relationship, to withdraw myself from God ... A sinful act is less important for the disorder it creates than for what it says about me as a person: Who Am I? Whom do I love? What is my attitude toward God? W. Burghardt, SJ

Taken from *Day by Day: The Notre Dame Prayer book for Students*. Ave Maria Press, 1975.