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The

CATHOLIC BOY EXAMINES HIS CONSCIENCE



By
**THE REVEREND
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The Catholic Boy Examines His Conscience

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Why An Examination Of Conscience?

The big American airlines give their giant transport planes a quick but thorough examination after every flight. After every so-many thousands of miles they take the whole plane apart and minutely examine every section to see if it is working as it should. Even a small flaw in the engine or other vital part could cause a crack up.

Flaws can and do develop in the machinery of our souls which might cause our spiritual lives to crash. To avoid this, our Holy Mother the Church urges every one of us to examine his conscience regularly. She wants us to give ourselves a complete and general examination every month or so; a quick and suitable examination at the end of each day. Unless we examine ourselves well every time we go to confession, we simply will not be in a position to explain the true condition of the soul to our confessor.

Avoiding Sin

The value of an examination of conscience lies in the fact that in using it well, we come to recognize certain sins or faults as our own particular weakness. In reminding ourselves of this regularly, we are spurred on to eliminate these defects from our soul. It is like the punch an intelligent

boxer uses against the weakest spot of his opponent. Once he learns this spot he continuously aims all his heaviest blows at that particular weakness.

Striving For Virtue

The purpose of an examination of conscience however is not merely to drive away our faults. It should be used also to cultivate virtues in our souls. It is not merely a clearing away process, but it aids the development of positive qualities of the Christian character. For this reason, we shall examine ourselves in this booklet according to certain virtues of the Christian life. We will thus have an opportunity of judging for ourselves whether we are not only avoiding sin but also whether we are really practicing the virtues which a Catholic young man should possess. Christ expects us to be not merely negative Christians but active, living exemplars of His holy virtues.

Have Courage

Having made a good examination of conscience, place yourself in the care of Our Blessed Lady, the Refuge of Sinners. Whatever your sins may be, however shameful, tell them humbly and without fear, humbly and with sorrow. Seek your confessor's advice when in doubt. Obey his warnings.

God will then take away all your sins and give you His grace to overcome future temptations, to control your passions and to acquire all the virtues which you need.

Mortal Sin

In order for a sin to be a MORTAL SIN, these three conditions must be present:

1. The nature of the sin must be serious. It must seriously offend God, ourselves or others. If we are not sure whether it is serious we are bound to ask our confessor.

2. We must know that what we are doing is a *mortal* sin at the time we are doing it.

3. We must give full consent.

We must *freely* and *deliberately* choose to commit the act. Hence, we could not commit a serious sin if we were asleep or partially asleep, or forced to act against our will.

We Cannot Remain Ignorant

It is no use to argue over a period of time "as long as I did not think it was a mortal sin I did not commit a mortal sin." God gives us the responsibility of knowing definitely what is mortal and what is not. Anyone who neglects to inform himself on this point is guilty.

Some boys excuse their going with dangerous companions or to places dangerous to their virtue on the grounds "My Parents let me." They excuse their wrongdoing, with: "I know other Catholic boys who act that way."

We cannot fool God, and we must not try to fool ourselves in matters of conscience. We have the duty to ask our confessor about any doubts we might have concerning the seriousness of our sins. We cannot pretend that certain things are right when they are really wrong or that certain things are not as bad as God knows them to be. It is important that we learn to judge our sins as God judges them.

Prayer Before The Examination Of Conscience

Dear God,
Who will one day be my Judge,
Help me prepare well for Confession.
I want to see and know my sins
As You see and know them.
Help my memory,
So that I will not fail
To tell anything in which
I have seriously offended You.
I shall try to recall how often
I have committed these sins.

Above all dear God,
Give me true sorrow for my sins.
To acquire this I need Your help.
Remind me of the Happiness of Heaven,
Which I deserve to lose by my sin,
And the terrors of Hell
Which I have merited.
I want to learn to hate sin
And to avoid it
Because You are so good and sin is so evil.

Faith

Do I accept fully and completely all the truths God has revealed through His Church?

Have I neglected opportunities which have come to me to strengthen the faith of others, or to encourage others to learn about our faith?

Have I endangered my faith by reading articles contrary to certain truths which the Church teaches?

Have I made light of or even ridiculed certain doctrines or laws of the Catholic religion as if I know more than Christ or His Church?

Have I neglected my duty in learning the truths of my religion and the reasons for them so that I can ably defend them to others?

Do I endanger my faith by associating with companions who have no faith or an

erroneous one? I thus place myself in the danger of accepting their rule of values and of disregarding my own true values. My values of life are based on faith; theirs upon worldly considerations.

If I have doubts about certain truths at times such as free will, existence of God, etc., do I try to remove these doubts by consulting those who can inform me intelligently?

Have I been afraid to make the ordinary public acknowledgments that I am a Catholic, as for example, greeting a priest; tipping my hat as I pass a church; refusing to eat meat in non-Catholic company on days of abstinence; saying grace at meals in public places?

Have I consulted a fortune-teller or joined in fortune telling games in the belief that I could learn something about the future?

Have I made use of "good luck" charms?

Have I been irreverent in the use of sacramentals, such as holy water, the Sign of the Cross, medals, etc.?

Hope

Do I make frequent enough use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist as my own individual spiritual needs require? I cannot rely solely upon my own strength to overcome temptation.

Do I neglect my morning and evening prayers?

Have I neglected to pray in time of temptation?

Have I deliberately entered a serious and unnecessary occasion of sin, thinking that God would miraculously preserve me from sin or graciously forgive me if I fell?

Have I said or thought that it was impossible for me to overcome a certain passion or sinful habit?

Have I said "it's no use to try to be good" or permitted discouragement to take possession of my heart because of my frequent faults or my lack of progress in virtue?

Have I deliberately neglected any opportunities for prayer and devotion which would have made me stronger in virtues?

Have I lost confidence in God because I did not receive exactly what I prayed for?

Have I questioned God's loving Providence on my behalf when trials and suffering came to me?

Love Of God

Have I missed Mass on a Sunday or a holyday without a sufficient reason?

Have I without reason come late to Mass, missing the Offertory, or have I left before the Communion of the Mass?

Have I received Holy Communion when

I knew that I had mortal sin on my soul or which I did not tell in confession because of shame or fear or plain deceit?

If I have had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, did I say an act of contrition immediately afterwards and resolve to go to confession as soon as possible?

Did I spend a reasonable amount of time in thanksgiving after Communion, thus using well these most precious moments of the day?

Have I disturbed or caused annoyance to others at Mass?

Have I assisted at Mass without trying to realize what was taking place before me?

Did I make the effort necessary to say my morning and night prayers in a proper manner?

Did I knowingly eat meat on Friday or some other day of abstinence?

Have I failed to give some of what I earned to the Church?

Have I been unfaithful to little promises I made to God?

Have I been disrespectful towards those whom God has placed over me and who represent God?

Reverence For God

Have I habitually used the name of "God" or "Christ" or "Jesus" or "Lord" as

a byword, or as an expression of impatience?

Do I use swear words?

Have I laughed at others' profane use of God's name or other irreverent speech, as if I thought it amusing?

Have I repeated the profanity of others as something amusing and clever?

Have I been faithful to my Holy Name Pledge?

Love Of Neighbor—I

Have I refused in my heart to forgive a person who has injured me?

Have I over a considerable period of time refused to talk to or acknowledge someone who has wronged me?

When I myself was guilty of doing evil against my neighbor, have I refused in word or deed to show that I was sorry and wished to be forgiven?

Have I said unkind and uncharitable things about others?

Have I called others unkind names?

Have I held a grudge against others, even though I did make an effort at forgiveness?

Have I acted hurt and cool towards others?

Have I tried to turn certain boys against others?

Have I blamed others for my own mistakes or wrongdoing?

Have I given bad example especially to younger boys by cursing in their presence, by quarreling, by impure talk, by showing bad pictures and writings?

Have I neglected opportunities which came my way to perform any of the *corporal* works of mercy?

1) To feed the hungry.

2) To give away unneeded clothing to relief agencies or those who could use them.

3) To visit the sick.

4) To attend the wake of some deceased neighbor or friend.

“Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me.” (*Matt.* 25, 40).

Have I neglected an opportunity I may have had of performing the *spiritual* works of mercy?

1) To admonish the sinner.

2) To instruct the ignorant.

3) To counsel the doubtful.

4) To comfort the sorrowful.

5) To bear wrongs patiently. “Two wrongs never make a right.”

6) To forgive injuries. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

7) To pray for the living and the dead.

Love Of Neighbor—II

Have I induced another to sin to satisfy my own passion?

Have I permitted jealousy of another, who was preferred to me, to show itself in my conduct?

Have I told my friends the unkind remarks of others made about them, thus making more trouble?

Have I made unkind, sarcastic remarks to others?

Have I made others angry?

Have I attributed wrong motives to others even when they intended good?

Have I contributed to the venial sins of others by unreasonably teasing or annoying them?

Have I prevented others from performing a good work by telling them not to do it?

Have I been moody and gloomy in the presence of others, thus making them uncomfortable and unhappy?

Have I said or done anything to injure the good name of my neighbor?

Have I made an effort to repair this damage?

Even though my neighbor has done wrong, he has a right to his reputation among those who do not know of his faults. Have I sinned in telling others of these faults?

Have I lied in important matters?

In light matters?

Have I continued to steal small amounts at regular intervals and so taken a large sum over a period of time?

Have I willfully injured the property of another to a serious extent?

Have I damaged things belonging to others by carelessness and misuse? This includes the property of the school I attend or company for which I work.

Have I borrowed things from others, such as small sums of money, books, articles of clothing, etc., and never returned them?

Have I kept lost articles of small value when I knew or could find the owner?

Have I lied my way out of small debts and obligations?

Have I obtained honors and prizes in school by deceptive means such as cheating or copying, especially if in this way I deprived others of them?

Have I been guilty of cheating in games of chance, thus gaining by dishonesty?

Have I failed to reveal to others the mistakes they made in giving me too much change or more of an article than I paid for?

Have I given full-time service to my employer? To accept full pay otherwise is stealing.

NOTE: *Restitution is to be made upon the*

advice of your confessor in the above cases concerning stealing.

Chastity

Have I deliberately taken delight in impure thoughts and images in my mind after I recognized them to be evil?

Have I been slow and half-hearted in trying to banish bad thoughts and desires?

Have I failed to check vigorously impulses and daydreams of unruly love and affections? All temptations against holy purity must be met decisively in one of two ways: immediate flight or direct snubbing.

Have I knowingly consented to a desire for impure experiences, without any effort to suppress the desire?

Have I told filthy stories?

Have I listened to filthy stories?

Have I read suggestive books or looked at bad pictures which were apt to cause serious temptations to sins of impurity?

Have I shown a deliberate or even interest in the evil conversation of others?

Have I sought out or continued companionship with others whom I knew to be inclined to evil jests and words?

Have I read books or magazines that were at least dangerous to my holy purity?

Have I violated my Legion of Decency

Pledge by attending movies listed as objectionable?

Have I allowed my eyes to wander in curiosity over dangerous objects?

Have I allowed others to touch me in an impure manner?

Have I touched myself or others impurely?

Have I taken part in prolonged or frequent kisses and embraces?

Have I permitted decent expressions of love or friendship for another to be prolonged to the point of danger of lust?

In dancing have I held my partner too tightly? I must never be the cause of sin in another.

Have I sought the friendship of others just to satisfy vanity or sensuality?

Have I neglected to use special opportunities of grace and prayer when I was passing through a period of more than usual temptations?

Have I fallen for the false opinion of the world that God's law in this matter is old fashioned, impossible, or harmful?

Temperance

Have I been temperate in the use of the following: Food, drink, dress, speech, recreation? To use any of these too much is sinful.

Do I seek recreation that is harmful to my health?

Did I take a great risk or dare?

Do I frequently keep late hours? This is harmful to my body and my soul.

Do I ignore warnings to dress according to the weather, thus endangering my health?

Have I knowingly broken my fast and then received Holy Communion?

Have I taken more intoxicating liquor than was good for me, even though I did not become actually drunk?

Have I taken intoxicating liquor against my better judgment just because I was urged to by others, especially when I felt I would be better off not to take it?

Have I made a companion of one who drinks too much?

Have I jested about drunkenness and so lessened others' hatred of it as a grave sin?

Have I ridiculed others because they do not drink?

Have I failed to develop temperance in myself by neglecting acts of self-denial I could frequently perform?

Obedience

NOTE: Each of the questions below apply equally to parents, foster-parents or guardians.

Have I failed to show love and gratitude

to my parents, either by neglecting opportunities to do so, or by deliberately hurting them in small ways?

Have I failed in the respect due my parents, being openly ashamed of them, talking harshly or angrily to them, saying unkind things about them?

Have I disobeyed parents when they forbade my going with bad companions, or to bad shows and dangerous places?

Have I upset the home of my parents by frequently disobeying the rules they had a right to make—concerning the persons to be brought into the house, concerning the hours I kept at night, concerning my conduct within the home?

Have I disobeyed my parents in small things that they commanded or forbade?

Have I deliberately given in to hatred of my mother or my father, refusing to speak to them.

Have I habitually treated my parents harshly, speaking contemptuously to them or of them, ridiculing them, cursing them, causing them severe pain and sorrow?

Have I been stubborn and peevish and openly resentful against my parents?

Have I lied to my parents to avoid a reprimand or punishment?

Have I neglected to ask or take advice from my parents and follow it?

Have I selfishly refused to make life

more comfortable and enjoyable for my parents.

Have I failed to realize in a practical way, that the authority of my parents, my teachers, my pastors, comes from God; that when I disobey them I disobey Him?

Have I resented justifiable corrections by those in authority over me?

Have I, as a pupil in school, been disrespectful and disobedient to teachers?

Have I, as a pupil in school, seriously undermined the authority and harmed the work of my teacher by slander, rebellion, etc.?

Have I given bad example to fellow pupils by laziness or disobedience?

Have I, as a citizen, disregarded laws made for the safety and well-being of all?

Humility

Do I complain, "why does this happen to me and not to someone else," thus refusing to accept God's providence on my behalf?

Have I made light of or even ridiculed certain doctrines or laws of the Catholic religion?

Have I, with but an ordinary training in religious teaching, presumed to make quick judgment about doctrines I scarcely understood?

Have I refused to forgive someone who wronged me because I considered my honor a more valuable thing than that of God, Who forgave His enemies and commanded me to forgive mine?

Have I rebelled against superiors and the serious commands they gave because I thought my knowledge and dignity freed me from the necessity of obedience?

Have I failed to confess certain mortal sin I had committed because I said they were "my own affairs," that "they were no business of the priest?"

Have I bragged about my accomplishments, my virtues, my abilities?

Have I shown my pride in the form of sensitiveness, resentment, pouting, peevishness?

Do I resent correction?

Have I complained about God's providence in permitting me certain trials, as if I were deserving of better treatment from Him?

Do I accept the trials of life in the spirit of Christian courage?

Do I frequently resolve to do good and remain good no matter what others do or what happens?

Have I looked down on others who were less wealthy, less cultured, less learned, less prominent, less gifted than I?

Have I been too proud to take second

place in any work or activity, withdrawing from it or hindering it because I could not be first?

Have I neglected daily prayer as if to get along without God's help?

Prayer After Confession

Dear God,

I am sorry for my sins.

You have been so good to me,
And I in return have shown you
So much selfishness and sin.

Help me realize

That sin

Can never be an approach to happiness;

That to do what I want to do

At a cost of displeasing You

Must of necessity

Bring me misery.

The defiance of Your Will

Can never get me

Anything worth having

Because Your Will is always good,

And sin is always evil.

I acknowledge my foolishness,

My sinfulness.

Like Mary Magdalen and Saint Peter

I beg your forgiveness.

I beg for mercy.

I promise to make every effort

Never again to offend You, Dear Lord,

Amen.

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