



Haungs, Edwin C.
An examination of ...
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E X A M I N A T I O N
of
C O N S C I E N C E

for
Married Couples
by

EDWIN C. HAUNGS, S. J.

THE QUEEN'S WORK

3115 South Grand Boulevard
ST. LOUIS 18, MO.



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OF
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THE QUEEN'S WORK

Deacidified

An Examination of Conscience for Married Couples

Preface

SOME years ago I was standing on the corner about two blocks from our College Church in St. Louis, waiting for a streetcar. Out from the drugstore just back of me suddenly emerged a shamefaced-looking little man. With his left hand he was clutching the wire handle of a small paper bucket, which quite obviously contained ice cream.

He looked at me and then looked away. He took a few steps toward me and then turned away. Finally when I smiled, he walked up, lifted the bucket of ice cream on a not-too-clean index finger, and held it close to my face. It remained there during the entire dialogue, of which only his part is interesting.

“Do you know the church two blocks down the street?” he asked.

I confessed I was a member of the community that staffed it.

“Funny priests!” he muttered. “Funny priests!”

As this is merely one of the milder adjectives that at various times have been applied to us Jesuits, I wasn't too surprised. But I realized that this was only

prelude to something on his mind that was very important.

He waved the pint of ice cream back and forth in front of my nose.

"Guess what I got in there," he commanded.

That was no sixty-four-dollar question; but I saw that he didn't want me to answer, so I shook my head as if I were completely mystified.

"Ice cream," he said, "a pint of ice cream . . . strawberry!" Then he shook his head again, and after muttering, "Queer priests!" he approached his explanation.

"Tonight I was coming back from work, and I stopped in at that church for confession. I told my sins; but when I said that sometimes I wasn't kind to my wife, the priest stopped me.

"'What's that mean?' the priest asked.

"What's it ever mean when a guy says that he hasn't been kind to his wife? I didn't know, so I guess I kinda stumbled. The priest didn't say any more; but when I got through, what do you suppose he gave me for a penance?"

I didn't know the answer to that one, so this time I shook my head in sincere ignorance.

"Funny priests! Yes; darned funny priests! That priest turned to me, and he says, 'For your penance you will stop in at a drugstore on the way home tonight and buy your wife a pint of ice cream.

Make it strawberry if you can. I hear women like that kind of ice cream.'

"Well you could have knocked me over without a rolling pin. So I dropped into the drugstore, and I bought the ice cream."

He looked around with a worried air. When he spoke again, he almost whispered. "Gee, father, I'm afraid to go home. When I come into the house with this ice cream, she'll be sure I've been up to something that I'm trying to square. But a guy's got to do his penance, even if it means taking ice cream home to his wife."

And he sagged down the street, trailing the small carton of ice cream pathetically beside him.

I thought of that little incident when to my desk came Father Haungs's "An Examination of Conscience for Married Couples." I read it through with the keenest interest. So did Father Dowling, who is deeply concerned with the happiness of a number of married couples who meet in his office to discuss their problems. So did the few married people for whom I previewed the booklet. Let me say that they had the good grace to read it and blush.

You see, there are two sections to a correct examination of conscience. The first section asks, "What evil have I done?" The second asks, "What good should I have done?" The first section concerns itself with what we call sins. The second section is concerned with that forgotten half of

the Christian's life—the duties of his state in life.

We are strong on asking ourselves about sins we have committed. We forget altogether to ask ourselves about the virtues we should have cultivated.

Most husbands do not come home and horsewhip their wives. Most wives—despite the comic strips—do not get their exercise by heaving pots of stew at reluctant spouses. Very few Catholic husbands or wives are unfaithful in great things. Very few of them commit in the bosom of the family major crimes.

But any husband or wife can tell you that it isn't the big crimes that make for unhappiness inside of marriage. It is the bad manners, the cold neglects, the thoughtlessness, the petty meanness, squabbles over money, disagreement about the children and their discipline, contests over such trifles as a radio program or the use of tooth paste as against tooth powder.

Few marriages go on the rocks because the husband turns out to be a highway robber, but many a wedding has headed for the rocks because the husband kept his good manners for the office and his bad manners for his wife and children.

Few wives turn out to be incorrigible shrews. But in a wife a husband looks for a kind of combination of acolyte, cheering section, staunchest friend, and kindest audience.

So any married person will improve his

whole character and his whole home life if he just bothers to read the questions which Father Haungs asks for him or her. Father Haungs himself is convinced that if every husband and wife were to make this examination of conscience once a week, unhappiness in marriage would be cut down to practically a vanishing point.

Marriage is a career, a difficult profession. A married person needs knowledge and technique in order to live happily with that other strange, charming, and often inconsistent and difficult person to whom he pledged a lifetime of love and loyalty.

So indeed wise is the person who sits down to ask himself how well he is succeeding in his career in marriage and what effort he has made to adjust himself to the person with whom he finds deepest joy or, pitifully enough, constant opportunity for friction.

We present "An Examination of Conscience for Married Couples" with a real hope that it will do a world of good.

We have a kind of expectation that those who read it will rise to become better husbands or wives. Perhaps they will even slip a copy of this booklet into an envelope and send it to some couple whose marriage they may see moving toward coldness or sheer disaster.

I honestly believe that it is a very important contribution, this little booklet, toward happiness in marriage.

DANIEL A. LORD, S. J.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR HUSBANDS

I. MY HOME.

1. Do I take an interest in my home?
2. Do I make my home an attractive place by:
 - a. Cutting the grass?
 - b. Cleaning the garage?
 - c. Cleaning the cellar?
 - d. Putting up storm windows?
 - e. Putting up screen doors?
 - f. Doing odd jobs?
3. Do I show my love of home by spending some time there?
4. What have I contributed to the happiness of my family life?
5. What is my reaction if dinner is late?
6. What is my contribution to the spirit of the main family meal:
 - a. Glum silence?
 - b. Anger?
 - c. Impatience?
 - d. Continual nagging?
 - e. Cheerfulness?
 - f. Good conversation?
 - g. Interest in everyone and every-thing?

II. MY WORK.

1. Am I really interested in my work?
2. Have I tried to improve myself?

3. Do I begin my work promptly?
4. Do I waste my employer's time?
5. Do I rush out immediately at quitting time?
6. Do I conduct myself at work as a Catholic gentleman:
 - a. In my language?
 - b. In the stories I tell?
 - c. In my actions?
7. Do I realize that among my co-workers I am a walking advertisement of the Catholic Church?
8. Do I realize that non-Catholics are watching me and that my example may bring them into the Church or keep them out of the Church?
9. Do I treat the women with whom I work as I would have other men treat my daughter?

III. MYSELF PHYSICALLY.

1. Am I neat and clean?
2. Do I shave regularly?
3. Do I have my hair cut regularly?
4. Are my clothes pressed regularly?
5. Are my shoes always shined?
6. Do I realize that my wife likes to have her husband dressed as well as his means will permit?
7. Do I lounge around the house in clothes which are a source of annoyance or embarrassment to my wife?

8. Must I be dragooned into buying a new suit?
9. Do I sit down to dinner in my working clothes?

IV. MYSELF INTELLECTUALLY.

1. Am I intellectually in a rut?
2. Have I tried to improve myself?
3. Do I read *good* books?
4. Do I read *good* magazines?
5. How much Catholic reading do I do?
6. Do I speak grammatically?
7. Have I tried to develop my talents as a conversationalist?

V. MYSELF SPIRITUALLY.

1. Do I really work at my religion?
2. Do I know something about my religion?
3. Am I proud to be a Catholic?
4. When the occasion arises, do I defend my faith? Or do I hide my head?
5. How often do I go to confession and Holy Communion? Am I satisfied with this?
6. Do I ever receive Holy Communion with my family?
7. Must they always urge me to go to Holy Communion, with them or alone?

8. Am I on time for Mass on Sundays and holydays?
9. Do I remain at Mass until the end?
10. Do I always sit as far back in the church as possible? Or do I stand in the rear of the church?
11. Do I ever go to Mass on weekdays?
12. Do I ever go to church:
 - a. In the evening?
 - b. For holy hour?
 - c. For a novena?
 - d. For a mission?
13. Do I ever make a retreat?
14. What do I do during Mass:
 - a. Use the missal?
 - b. Say the rosary?
 - c. Look at the clock?
 - d. Daydream?
15. Do I say my morning and night prayers?
16. Do I ever drop in for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament?
17. Do I say grace before and after meals?
18. Am I quite content to remain in mortal sin for weeks? months?
19. Are my confessions routine? Or do I make a serious effort to improve them?

VI. WHAT KIND OF HUSBAND AM I?

1. Do I still love my wife?
2. Do I expect her to take my love for granted year after year? Or do I

- still show her those signs of affection which I showed her years ago?
3. Do I remember our wedding anniversary? her birthday?
 4. Do I occasionally surprise her with a little gift?
 5. Do I ever tell her to buy a hat or a dress? Or must she always beg me for new clothes?
 6. Do I ever tell her that I love her?
 7. Do I still kiss her when I leave in the morning and when I return at night?
 8. Do I ever thank her for all she has done and does:
 - a. Given me children?
 - b. Cares for our children?
 - c. Keeps house and makes our home?
 - d. Does the buying?
 - e. Does the cooking?
 - f. Does the sewing?
 - g. Does the washing?
 - h. Does the nursing?
 9. Do I notice and comment on:
 - a. A new dress?
 - b. A new hat?
 - c. A new hairdo?
 10. Do I ever tell her how attractive she looks?
 11. Do I ever tell her what a good cook she is?
 12. Am I stingy with her in money matters?

13. Do I keep things secret from her which she as my wife ought to know:
 - a. My salary?
 - b. My insurance?
14. Do I give her enough money to run the home, clothe and educate the children, etc.?
15. Am I putting some money away for the future?
16. Do I see to it that she gets some recreation and relaxation away from the home?
17. Do I speak to her in a way that betokens love and respect?
18. Do I praise her before others? Or do I belittle her?
19. Do I discuss her faults with others?
20. Do I act as if she were a slave, making her bring me this and that?
21. Do I try to save her work by hanging up my clothes, etc.?
22. Do I make decisions and then merely tell her what to do without asking her opinion?
23. Do I pout or become angry if she prefers a course of action different from mine?
24. Am I really considerate of her?
25. Am I selfish, thinking only of myself?
26. Am I selfish and inconsiderate in the intimacies of married life, thinking only of my personal satis-

faction? Have I tried to get the woman's point of view in this matter?

27. Do I *make* my wife do things—or else?
28. Do I get my own way by disrupting the peace of the home, arguing, pouting?
29. Do I treat her relatives and friends kindly and graciously?
30. When differences arise, do I discuss them with her calmly and honestly?
31. Do I really help her to lead a good Catholic life? Or am I an obstacle to her faith?
32. When moral problems arise, do I seek the advice of a competent priest? Or do I consult the man next to me in the office?

VII. WHAT KIND OF FATHER AM I?

1. Do I realize the nobility of fatherhood as God sees it?
2. Do I realize the serious obligations entailed in fatherhood?
3. Have I accepted willingly and cheerfully the sacrifices connected with fatherhood:
 - a. The cost?
 - b. The lessening of personal freedom?
4. Have I shirked fatherhood and yet taken the pleasures connected with my state in life?

5. Do I realize that the supporting of a family does not exhaust my obligations as a father?
6. Have I really strived to make a success of my job as a father?
7. Have I tried to improve myself by:
 - a. Reading?
 - b. Asking questions?
 - c. Talking things over with my wife?
8. Do my wife and I discuss our differences and the children's problems in private and after the children have retired?
9. Do I ever countermand the orders of my wife to the children and thus weaken her authority?
10. Do I discuss teachers, priests, etc., in the presence of the children?
11. Do I send my children to a Catholic school?
12. Have I tried to win the confidence of my children from their earliest years?
13. Do I ever take my children:
 - a. To a ball game?
 - b. To the theater?
 - c. To a picnic?
14. Have I tried to get their point of view on life?
15. Have I always encouraged their questions and answered them honestly?

16. Have I shunned or welcomed chats with my children?
17. Have I prepared my sons for the age of puberty?
18. Am I interested in my children's future:
 - a. The schools they will attend?
 - b. The careers they will follow?
19. What would be or has been my reaction to a religious vocation in the family?
20. What have I done to make my home a very happy place for my children?
21. What do I do after dinner:
 - a. Read the paper?
 - b. Stimulate conversation among the family?
22. Have I encouraged my children to bring their friends home?
23. Do I know my children's companions?
24. Do I know what my children are reading?
25. Do I know what movies and other places of amusement they frequent?
26. Do I know what time they get home at night?
27. Have I done anything to encourage recreation:
 - a. Within the home?
 - b. Within the family?
28. Do I encourage the visits of other families so that my children may

- become acquainted with good Catholic young people?
29. Am I interested in my children's school work?
 30. Do I sign their report cards mechanically?
 31. Do I help them with their homework?
 32. Do I encourage their efforts and praise them when they succeed?
 33. Do I attend their school functions?
 34. Do I know their teachers?
 35. Do I see that they frequent the sacraments regularly?
 36. Do I give them a good example in the matter of frequenting the sacraments?
 37. Do they see in me a real Catholic man?
 38. Are my children proud of their father? Or are they ashamed of him?
 39. Do I give them the idea that religion is only for women and children?
 40. Do I arrive at church late for Mass?
 41. Do they ever see me intoxicated?
 42. Have they ever heard me use improper language?
 43. Do I criticize or question the Church in their presence:
 - a. Marriage laws?
 - b. Birth control?
 - c. Money matters?

44. Am I always modest:
- a. In their presence?
 - b. When I am alone?
 - c. When I am with my wife?
45. Have my children been able to learn from me the beauty of Christian marriage and the nobility of fatherhood?
46. Do I share the responsibilities of rearing my family? Or do I leave all such responsibilities to my wife?
47. What kind of literature is around the house?

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR WIVES

I. MY HOME.

1. Is my home neat and clean?
2. Is my home attractive?
3. Is my home comfortable?
4. Do I make attractive use of color in the curtains, draperies, etc.?
5. Do I allow my family to relax, to *use* their home?
6. Is my housework done early in the day?
7. Do I leave soiled dishes piled up in the kitchen?
8. Am I on the lookout for ways to improve my home? Do I read magazines that might help me in this regard?
9. Are my husband and children proud to bring their friends home? Do I welcome their friends?
10. Is there a genuine religious atmosphere in my home? Are there:
 - a. Pictures of Jesus, Mary, etc.?
 - b. Crucifixes?
 - c. Things necessary for a sick call?
11. Is my work done systematically?
12. Am I careful about money?
13. Do I keep a record of my expenses?
14. Am I trying to save money for the future?

II. MY TABLE.

1. Are the meals served promptly?
2. Do I consider the nutritional value of foods?
3. Do I introduce variety into the menu?
4. Am I on the lookout for new and appetizing recipes?
5. Are my meals appetizing to look at:
 - a. Are they served daintily?
 - b. Is there a variety of color in them?
6. Do I cook the same things week after week?
7. Do I prepare everything as attractively as possible even when there are to be no guests?
8. Is the table set attractively:
 - a. Candles?
 - b. Flowers?
 - c. Tablecloth?
 - d. Napkins?
9. Is the table set completely before the family sits down? Or am I constantly jumping up for something that is needed?
10. Is the main family meal a real family affair?
11. Is there a spirit of happiness and gaiety at the table?
12. Is the table conversation pleasant? Or do I rehearse all the unpleasant circumstances of the day?

13. Does the entire family remain at table until the last person has finished eating?
14. Is grace said before and after meals?
15. Do the children ask to be excused, if they *must* leave early?
16. Is the table conversation such that the children can participate in it?
17. Am I teaching my children the rules of good etiquette:
 - a. By my good example?
 - b. By an occasional gentle reminder?

III. MYSELF PHYSICALLY.

1. Am I careful about my personal cleanliness?
 - a. Clothes?
 - b. Hair?
 - c. Fingernails?
2. Am I neat in my appearance?
3. Do I try to keep myself attractive-looking?
4. Do I choose clothes wisely:
 - a. Price?
 - b. Pattern?
 - c. Color?
5. Do I try to keep my figure neat and trim?
6. In general am I as careful about my personal appearance now as I was before my marriage?

7. Is my husband proud to be seen with me?
8. Are my children proud of their mother?
9. Do I try to look my best when my husband comes home?
10. Do I dress according to my age? Or do I make frantic attempts to look younger than I am?
11. Am I always modest in my dress?

IV. MYSELF INTELLECTUALLY.

1. Am I intellectually stagnant?
2. Have I tried to improve my mind?
3. Have I kept up the practice of reading *good* books?
4. Do I read *good* magazines?
5. How much Catholic reading do I do:
 - a. Books?
 - b. Magazines?
 - c. Pamphlets?
 - d. Newspapers?
6. Do I know something about current events?
7. Have I tried to develop my talent as
 - a. conversationalist? Or are the subjects of conversations merely personalities and jokes?
8. Do I speak grammatically?

V. MYSELF SPIRITUALLY.

1. How often do I go to confession and receive Holy Communion?

2. Am I on time for Mass on Sundays and holydays?
3. Do I ever go to Mass on weekdays?
4. Do I remain in church until the Mass is over?
5. What is my method of hearing Mass?
6. Have I tried to use the missal?
7. How often do I say the rosary?
8. Do I say my morning and night prayers?
9. Do I say grace before and after meals?
10. Do I avoid in my language:
 - a. Vulgarity?
 - b. Obscenity?
 - c. Cursing?
 - d. Blasphemy?
11. Is the spirit of charity manifest in my:
 - a. Thoughts?
 - b. Words?
 - c. Actions?
 - (1) Toward my family?
 - (2) Toward my relatives?
 - (3) Toward my friends?
 - (4) Toward my neighbors?
 - (5) Toward my enemies?
12. Am I catty?
13. Am I really trying to model my life on Our Lady?
14. Do I keep confidences that are given me? secrets?

15. Do I lose my temper easily and frequently?
16. Am I selfish?
17. Am I generous:
 - a. To the poor?
 - b. To the Church?
 - c. To the missions?

VI. WHAT KIND OF WIFE AM I?

1. Do I still love my husband?
2. Have I made it a point to do those little things for my husband which keep the fires of love alive in the human heart?
3. Am I really interested in my husband's progress and success?
4. Do I encourage him?
5. Do I overlook his faults? Or do I high light them?
6. Do I discuss his faults and shortcomings with my friends?
7. Am I constantly trying to reform him?
8. Do I accept cheerfully the sacrifices that are demanded of him and of me by his business?
9. Am I jealous of him?
10. Do I belittle him before others?
11. Do I hold grudges against him and refuse to talk to him?
12. Do I hug the purse strings?

13. Do I demand a strict accounting of:
 - a. Everything he does?
 - b. Everything he spends?
14. Am I kind and gracious to his friends and relatives?
15. Have I done my best to help him in his business?
16. Have I given him good example?
17. Do I complain about:
 - a. Housework?
 - b. The care of the children?
 - c. Other household chores?
18. Do I without a very good reason refuse my husband the privileges of married life?
19. Do I grant my husband the privileges of married life only reluctantly?
20. Am I happy about sharing this intimacy with my husband?
21. When differences arise between my husband and myself, am I willing to discuss them calmly and honestly?
22. When moral problems arise, do I consult a competent priest or the lady next door?
23. Do I nag my husband?

VII. WHAT KIND OF MOTHER AM I?

1. Have I tried to realize the beauty of motherhood as God sees it?

2. Have I tried to realize that motherhood and sacrifice are synonymous?
3. Have I accepted the sacrifices willingly and cheerfully, without complaining?
4. Have I shirked motherhood because:
 - a. It might curtail my social life?
 - b. It might mean that we would have a less expensive car?
 - c. I might lose my figure?
 - d. I am afraid of what others might say?
5. Do I realize that motherhood is a life career demanding all my energy and all my talents?
6. Have I tried to improve myself by:
 - a. Reading?
 - b. Asking questions?
 - c. Discussing with my husband the the development and progress of the children?
7. Have I really strived to make a success of my job as a mother?
8. Do I discuss the children with my husband in private and after the children have retired?
9. Do my husband and I discuss in private and after the children have retired our differences with regard to discipline, etc.?
10. Do I send my children to a Catholic school?
11. Do I discuss teachers, priests, nuns, etc., in the children's presence?

12. Do I in their presence take the children's part against the teacher?
13. Have I tried from my children's earliest years to win their confidence?
14. Am I shocked by what my children tell me?
15. Have I tried to get their point of view on life?
16. Have I always answered their questions honestly?
17. What have I done to teach them the virtue of purity?
18. Have I prepared my daughters for the age of puberty?
19. Have I made home a very happy place for my children?
20. Have I encouraged them to bring their friends home?
21. Do I know my children's companions?
22. Do I know what my children are reading?
23. Do I know what movies and other places of recreation they are frequenting?
24. Do I know what time they get home at night?
25. Have I done anything to encourage recreation:
 - a. Within the family?
 - b. Within the home?

26. Have I made it easy for my children to approach me with their problems?
27. Do I invite other families to visit us so that my children may have a chance to meet good Catholic young people?
28. Am I interested in my children's school work?
29. Do I help them with their homework?
30. Do I encourage them in their efforts and praise them when they succeed?
31. Do I attend my children's school functions?
32. Do I know my children's teachers?
33. Do I see to it that my children attend the sacraments frequently?
34. Do I give my children a good example in the matter of frequenting the sacraments?
35. Are my children being reared in an atmosphere of genuine Catholicity?
36. Can my children see in me at least a shadow of Our Lady by:
 - a. My attitude toward life?
 - b. My language?
 - c. My actions?
 - d. My submission to God's will?
37. Do I make empty threats where the obedience of my children is con-

- cerned? Or do I carry out those threats wisely and justly?
38. Do my children ever hear me:
 - a. Use improper language?
 - b. Tell questionable stories?
 - c. Talk about others?
 39. Am I ever immodest in my children's presence?
 40. Have I loved my children unwisely, spoiling them and thus making their adult life more difficult?
 41. Am I working outside the home? If I am, is that work really necessary? Is my outside work depriving my children of the proper care and protection?
 42. What would be or has been my reaction to a religious vocation in the family?
 43. Am I teaching my children the virtues and skills necessary for their future success in life:
 - a. The values of hard work?
 - b. The value of money?
 - c. Cooking?
 - d. Sewing?
 - e. Shopping?
 44. Do I nag my children?

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