

Private Examination of Conscience

The First Commandment: I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.

Do we truly love God above all, or do we sometimes give greater importance to things of this world: money, image, looks, clothes, popularity or selfish desires?

Do we claim to have good values, but often bend or abandon them to fit in and be "part of the group?"

Do we turn to God in thankful prayer or do we pray mostly when we want something?

Do we really want to be transformed by the will of God or do we just use our religion to "look" like good Christian people?

The Second Commandment: You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Do we show disrespect for God's name by misusing it out of frustration or anger, or to look "tough" to others? Do we hesitate to mention God's name in appropriate situations, in conversations with friends and family members?

Do we continue to learn about God by paying attention in church, religion class and through reading the diocesan newspaper, and paying attention to Catholic periodicals, articles on religion in the secular press and television programs?

The Third Commandment: Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

Do we come to church to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days? Do we attend Mass only when it is convenient or when it will make us "feel good?"

Do we participate in the Eucharist by praying and singing, or do we simply sit as spectators and wait to be entertained?

Do we pay close attention to the Word of God and open ourselves to God's call to allow his word to take effect in our lives?

Do we acknowledge the "true presence" of Christ in the Eucharist and receive Holy Communion with respect and reverence?

The Fourth Commandment: Honor your father and your mother.

Do we help bring peace and happiness to our families, or are we disrespectful of others and a source of hurt and division for those who are closest to us?

As parents, are we generous and patient with our children? Do we spend time with them and give them the attention they need? Do we set responsible limits for them and make sure they follow rules that will help them grow into responsible adults?

Are we willing to say "no" to our children or are we more likely to ignore problem behavior and hope it will "go away?"

Do we listen to our children carefully and treat them with respect?

As children, are we loving, respectful and obedient to our parents? Do we appreciate the many sacrifices they make for us? Do we say "Thank you" and "I love you" often enough?

Do we do our chores without being asked or do we wait for our parents to become upset before we move away from what we are doing?

Do we listen to our parents' reasoning when they say "no" to us?

The Fifth Commandment: You shall not kill.*

Have we injured another person through carelessness or fighting?

Have we placed ourselves or others in danger because of reckless use of alcohol or other drugs? Have we caused difficulties for ourselves or others because of their use?

Have we risked our lives by driving or riding with someone under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?

Do we strive to forgive those who have hurt us or do we hold on to resentment and desire for revenge?

Do we use our powers of influence well, especially our voting rights, to fight war, oppression, abortion and injustice, or do we allow those evils to continue by our apathy and our silence?

Have we been violent or abusive either in action or in speech? Have we been verbally abusive to our children or other family members?

Do we share what we have with those in need? Do we support the life and mission of the church by responsible stewardship – sharing our time, talent and treasure?

Do we bring our Christianity to everyday situations, or do we stand on the sidelines and complain about every flaw we can detect in others?

The Sixth Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.

Do we respect the dignity of the human body and the holiness of Christian marriage? Do we show that respect in our speech, or are crude language and jokes often part of our conversations?

Do we understand and appreciate the gift of our sexuality as a means of expressing our love [and God's love] in the Sacrament of Marriage?

Have we been faithful to our marriage, priestly or religious vows? Do we keep our commitments simply because we said we would, or do we seek to nourish ourselves and others through our lifetime commitments?

Have we dishonored our bodies or the body of another by fornication, impurity, unworthy conversation or thought leading to impure actions, such as premarital sexual activity of any kind, unchaste sexual activity in marriage, masturbation or viewing pornographic materials?

Have we encouraged others to sin by our failure to maintain good moral standards?

The Seventh Commandment: You shall not steal.

Do we respect the property of other people? Have we stolen, damaged or vandalized the property of others?

Have we cheated at work or in school? Have we encouraged others to sin by pressuring them into helping us cheat?

Are we honest and hardworking in school and at work?

Are we faithful to our promises? Can we be trusted?

The Eighth Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have we lied to stay out of trouble or to avoid a difficult situation?

Do we gossip about others? Have we damaged the reputation of another person by exaggeration or making up stories about them?

Can we be trusted with a secret?

Do we stand up for those unjustly accused, or are we merely a channel through which rumors pass, whether or not they are true?

The Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

Have we weakened or damaged our marriage commitment through our obsession with another person?

Do we respect the commitments of others and help them remain faithful to their promises?

Do we treat our marriages casually in our conversations and attitudes? Have we said or done anything which made a mockery of our sacred promises?

The Tenth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Are we satisfied with what God has given us or are we jealous of those who seem to have more?

Do we try to prove we are better than others by bragging or buying more things?

Do we appreciate our own good qualities, or do we constantly compare ourselves with others and become resentful or bitter?

Do we cope well with the problems that confront us and maintain our Christian hope in spite of hard times and difficulties?

Do we truly "seek first the Kingdom of God" in our lives and place our trust in him?

Do we reflect the peace, hope and joy of a people redeemed and made holy by the Blood of Christ?

** The fifth commandment is where we deal with life issues. Having an abortion, procuring one or assisting at one are grave matters. The wisdom of the church has shown that many find it difficult to forgive themselves in these situations. Fathers of children who have been aborted seem to have as many difficulties as mothers. Most dioceses provide means (in many places called "Project Rachel") to help them deal with the complicated issues involved so they can move on with their lives. For more information about Project Rachel in the Diocese of Allentown, call 1-866-3Rachel. Know that you are very much in our prayers!*