

Examination of Conscience based on the Fruit of the Spirit

*"I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.** Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit." Gal 5:16-26*

1. Love

Do I love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength above all else? Do I give to God what belongs to God? Do I truly love others as I love myself? Do my actions show it? Am I caring toward my family, my friends, and people I don't know? Do I make sacrifices for the good of others?

2. Joy

Am I joyful and content with what I have and with the gifts the Lord has given me? Have I envied another person or another's possessions or lifestyle? Do I trust that God loves me, calls me by name and will always provide for my material and spiritual needs? Do I joyfully submit to God's will? Am I willing to suffer joyfully for the sake of others?

3. Peace

Is there someone I need to forgive and have not? Do I hold grudges? Is my temper a problem? Do I hold anger or resentment in my heart? Have I ever told myself the lie that I am "unlovable," or "no good," or denied that I am an awesome beloved child of God? Have I been seeking peace with God, with others and my conscience?

4. Patience

Do I really honor my parents? Do I try to listen to what they ask of me and be patient with them? Do I lash out when I am frustrated? Do I curse in impatience? Am I tolerant of other people even if they disagree with me?

5. Kindness

Do I look to the needs of others and strive to treat every person as if they were Jesus Himself? Am I kind to myself, or am I too hard on myself? Do I give in to depression or self-pity? Have I always sought the supreme good of others? Am I kind in thought, word, and actions? Have I willfully turned away from opportunities to be kind?

6. Generosity

Am I generous with what I have? Have I stolen anything? Do I put too much trust or emphasis in material possessions? Have I given my time, talent and money to God and the poor? Do I serve God not counting the cost? Do I tithe and help the poor from my first or the best? Do I give of myself without being asked? Do I give the most or the least of myself?

7. Faithfulness

Am I truthful and understanding? Do I seek to tell the truth even when I may be embarrassed when I do? Am I loyal to my friends? Am I faithful to my commitment to God, His church, my family? Am I constant in my Christian calling to be a disciple of Christ? Am I committed sincerely in my Christian values? Are my priorities rightly ordered?

8. Gentleness

Do I always need to be in control? Does my need for power, recognition, or prestige take precedence over the need for God in my life? Do I force my will on others? Am I gentle with my eyes, mouth and hands especially when I am angry?

9. Self-control

Do I have a humble spirit of penance and self-denial as taught by Jesus? Do I guard my senses? Have I given into carnal pleasures, vanity, greed or lust? Am I guilty of fornication, masturbation, or adultery? Have I been immodest in anyway? Have I given into addiction, pornography, gluttony, or technology? Have I resorted to slander, gossip or detraction?

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How to Make a Good Confession

Confession is not difficult, but it does require preparation.

We should begin with prayer, placing ourselves in the presence of God, our loving Father. We seek healing and forgiveness through repentance and a resolve to sin no more.

Then we review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words, and actions for that which did not conform to God’s command to love him and one another through his laws and the laws of his Church.

This is called an examination of conscience.

To make an examination of conscience:

- Begin with a prayer asking for God’s help.
- Review your life with the help of some questions, which are based on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit
- Tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins.
- Make a firm resolution not to sin again.



Rite of Reconciliation

Reconciliation may be face-to-face or anonymous, with a screen between you and the priest. Choose the option that is the most comfortable for you.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say, “*Bless me, father, for I have sinned. My last confession was* [give the number of weeks, months, or years].”
2. Confess all of your sins to the priest. The priest will help you to make a good confession. If you are unsure about how to confess or you feel uneasy, just ask him to help you. Answer his questions without hiding anything out of fear or shame. Place your trust in God, a merciful Father who wants to forgive you.
3. Following your confession of sins, say, “*I am sorry for these and all of my sins.*”
4. The priest assigns you a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
5. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins. You mark yourself with the sign of the cross as he gives you the blessing of absolution
6. As you leave don’t forget to thank the priest for his ministry.
7. Go and say a prayer of thanksgiving to God in the church and don’t forget to do your penance.

If you attended the communal Penance Service and prayed the Act of Contrition with the assembly, then you may not recite this prayer at the individual confession.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things, I firmly intend with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God have mercy.
Amen.

OR

Act of Contrition

God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, do penance, and to amend my life.
Amen.

OR

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishment; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion or sin.
Amen.