

An examination of conscience

This list of questions came from a retreat I gave on the Sacraments. Participants were invited to write down four questions they thought they needed to ask themselves, and handed these to me anonymously. So here they are. I hope you find them helpful when it comes to making an examination of conscience.

Do I love God sufficiently to centre on Him completely while praying at Mass?

Could I make a greater effort to concentrate more, especially when in church?

Do I dress formally on a Sunday to honour our Lord at Mass or to be different to those who wear casual dress?

Where does the demarcation between reverent gestures end and ostentatious religious observance begin? Do I take too much pleasure in being known and recognised in church etc?

Do I put sufficient time aside for God in my life (to bathe in His light in the prayer of silence)?

What is it that is causing me to persist in postponing establishing a regular prayer-time in my daily life?

Do I pray often enough and long enough or do I fail to pray for people who need prayers said for them?

Do I spend the time I should in prayer and study of the scriptures enough to have a deep and meaningful relationship with God?

Do I allow caring, practical tasks to excuse failure to give adequate time to prayer and meditation?

Have my prayers been too routine and said without sufficient awareness of God's presence?

Am I tempted to watch TV instead of saying the rosary or reading the Bible etc?

Am I secure enough in my own faith, to be considered of little importance?

When I speak to God, faith, prayer, do I make claims for a more intimate knowledge than I possess?

Do I speak out on the moral issues of the day?

Am I doing anything to help my faith?

Do I listen with an attentive heart or am I drowned out by my own inner cravings and the appetites of the flesh?

Do I truly trust God to lead me in the right direction, or do I wish to regain (some) control?

Do I allow God to interfere with my agenda, or do I only fit him in when it suits me?

Do my work and other preoccupations prevent me from listening to the voice of God in my life?

Do I really believe?

Do I think too much about my eternal destiny?

Do I ever think of God?

Do I take the trouble to support Catholic action?

How do I show that I love God with all my heart and soul and strength?

Do I see God's creation as an extended family, requiring my love and care?

Am I judgemental of others' weaknesses?

Am I too quick in judging other people?

Am I intolerant and judgemental?

Do I judge and easily dismiss people after an unfavourable first impression?

Do I have poor thoughts of other people and not give them the benefit of the doubt?

Am I too critical of the shortcomings of others and fail to remedy my own?

Am I tolerant or am I too concerned about being right and wanting people to conform to my ideas?

Am I impatient with people?

Are my remarks sometimes hurtful to others?

Do I take pleasure in reacting excessively to mistakes and sleights from those closest to me, and then react by the use of scathing analyses of their motivations?

Do I project my weaknesses on to other people and use that as an excuse to gossip?

Am I too keen to be independent and not seek help from others who are often willing/wanting to help?

Do I not think enough of family and friends by taking them for granted?

Do I find it hard to forgive anyone who has hurt me?

Do I give proper consideration to thought, word and deed?

Am I sometimes too attached to something or someone and so dependent on them for happiness that isn't lasting and not true happiness?

Are my motives in doing good and serving others the right ones or do they make me feel good and need to feel superior?

Have I failed to take opportunities to speak to others of the love of God and His grace in furtherance of His Kingdom?

Have I been too quick to speak or act, giving insufficient time to think of the consequences for others?

Am I selfish in seeking my own company too often?

Am I making a determined effort to break away from my self-centredness and focus more on giving myself to other people?

Do I over-exaggerate to over-emphasize the truth (attention seeking – part of being self-centred!!)?

Do I find it difficult to forgive hurts or insults (either real or imagined?)

Do I pass by and sometimes suppress the demands of generosity (of time and money)?

Do I remember that God is served in the humble task and accomplish it well and without grumbling?

If I set my mind to do something, do I dislike being asked to do something else?

Do I daydream too much?

Have I allowed myself to be influenced by the values of secular society and thus be drawn away from living the Christian life?

Am I too vain?

Am I right to have given up trying in some troubled areas of my life?

Do I weaken the gifts God has given me through sloth and disorganisation?

Does my attraction for the opposite sex extend beyond legitimate boundaries? Do I commit adultery in my heart?

Do I have impure thoughts and fail to control them?

In asking God to create a pure heart within me do I secretly hope that he will delay the process or that I will resist it?

Do I find it too embarrassing to admit to sins of a physical or sexual nature?

Am I really sorry for the sins I have confessed?

Do I allow my difficulty of going to confession to deter me from going often enough?

Do I seek an easy, comfortable, secure life or a life lived in pursuit of God?