

## Examination of conscience

### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR GOOD CONFESSIONAL SPIRITUALITY

How to properly prepare for confession and how to receive this great grace of forgiveness of sins in the best way? The Church is clear on this issue, and the answers are hidden in a good examination of conscience.

For you, we have found a thorough examination of conscience written by a Croatian priest, don. Josip Radić, and consists of: an examination of conscience, sincere repentance, the decision not to sin again, the very act of holy confession and penance.

#### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

First of all, we should thank the Lord for the sacrament of Holy Confession. It is good to pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten our conscience and consciousness so that we can make a conscientious confession and for the priest who will confess us. We should confess all our sins honestly before the priest. Therefore, it is good to thoroughly examine our conscience before the holy confession in order to remember the sins committed.

Ask yourself honestly:

Do I approach the sacrament of St. confess with a sincere desire to cleanse my soul and gain a new life, to convert, to deepen my friendship with God, or do I confess out of custom, without a real desire to reform?

Do I sincerely repent of my sins, do I regret and cry over them because I offended God, my neighbor and myself, and because my sins are ruining my life?

Do I sincerely renounce every sin and do I really decide that I will not sin again or do I intend to continue sinning even after holy confession?

If there is no sincere repentance and decision that we will not sin again, and if we voluntarily conceal a serious sin, the confession is not valid and our sins are not forgiven. This is how we commit another new great sin, that is, we sacrilegiously confess and receive Christ's holy things - the sacraments - without the right intention. Holy confession is conversion and renunciation of every sin, even the smallest sin, and complete commitment to Christ and life in his love and grace.

Ask yourself:

When I went to confession for the last time, did I forget or perhaps deliberately kept silent about serious sins in past confessions, did I keep silent about the wrongs I committed, did I fulfill the prescribed penance, did I correct the evil I did to my neighbor, do I confess too rarely, I live have I been in grave sin for a long time, so I am burdened and listless? It would be good

to go to confession as often as possible, at least once a month and receive communion every Sunday and on holidays.

Then let us examine our conscience according to God's commandments.

1. God's commandment: Have no other gods with me Is God in the first place in my life? Do I have any other gods besides him, such as money, material wealth, career, reputation, honour, power, good reputation, that everyone must have a good opinion of me, body and physicality, clothes and external appearance, prestige in society and among friends, self-love? Are some people, for example, athletes, politicians, actors, popular people or some things like a car, television, computer, house, etc., my idols? Am I my own biggest idol? Maybe because of these idols I have a shallow conscience and easily break God's law. Am I superstitious? Do I believe that a black cat or the number 13 bring me bad luck, do I knock three times on a tree so that some events do not go badly for me? Do I believe that some symbols and objects bring me luck, for example a four-leaf clover, a horseshoe, a ladybug, a rošćić, a hunchback, a red ribbon and the like? Have I indulged in games of chance, poker machines, lotto, sports forecast and the like? Did I go to quacks, bioenergetics, voodoo and other self-styled prophets, dowzers and the like? Many chiropractors actually deal with bioenergy and some types of acupuncture are of magical origin. Have I taken courses in Transcendental Meditation, yoga, participated in rituals of Eastern and other sects, Hare Krishna, participated in the Sai Baba

movement or the Bahia religion or similar Eastern religious movements? Did I belong to a sect? Am I alone and did someone else read my palm, tell fortunes from a cup and cards? Do I read horoscopes, do I believe in the stars? Have I attended or participated in spiritualistic séances? Was I a member of a liberal party that relativizes truth and morality or a communist party that denies God? Have I accepted or supported sects and teachings or ideologies that the Church condemns and that support atheism? Have I read literature of magical origin or that which promotes hatred of God and man? Have I associated with those who mock religion and religious truths or who are anti-religious? Have I doubted the faith, have I deliberately denied or doubted the truths of the faith, such as heaven, purgatory and hell? Have I perhaps withheld my faith out of selfishness, consideration, or fear? Have I made a promise or vows and not kept them? Before you make your vow, turn to the priest to hear his advice. Do I give God enough of my time? Do I pray regularly or do I neglect prayer for long periods of time?

Do I read the Holy Scriptures, religious books and magazines or am I lazy and uninterested?

Am I seeking God, true truth and true joy with a sincere heart?

Do I love God, do I praise and glorify him, do I thank him?

Who or what belongs to the first place in my life? Who or what is my God?

2. God's commandment: Do not take the name of your God in vain

Did I curse God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints? Did I mention their names in anger, disrespectfully, in vain?

Did I utter insulting and vulgar words and thereby offend God, my neighbor and my soul and offend someone?

Did I listen to conversations and jokes and the like and watch TV shows where swearing and speaking vulgar and shameless words?

Have I often and unnecessarily mentioned the devil?

Did I encourage and lead someone to the sin of cursing?

Did I curse someone or something, was I arrogant, ironic and cynical?

Am I perhaps attributing to God the evil and bad things that happen in my life and accusing him?

3. God's command: Remember to celebrate the Lord's Day

Did I miss Holy Mass on Sunday and the commanded holidays because of my lukewarmness, carelessness and laziness?

Was I late for Mass or misbehaved at Mass?

Do I believe that the living Jesus is present in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine?

Did I avoid going to church devotions such as the Stations of the Cross, the rosary, folk devotions?

Did I work, except for what is absolutely necessary, on Sundays and holidays? Did I leave studying and homework for Sundays and holidays? With whom and how did I spend Sunday and holidays?

How much time do I spend on Sundays and holidays with my family, parents, relatives and

4. God's commandment: Respect your father and mother so that you may live long and that it may be good for you on earth how do I behave in the family? Am I working hard for the good and happiness of my family? Do I talk to my family members? Do I leave my home a lot? Have I always listened to and respected my parents? Did I deny those help, understanding and comfort? Did I insult them, threaten them or hit them? Have I neglected or abandoned them? Do I pray for my deceased family members? Did I neglect the Christian education of my own children? Did I provide love, tenderness and protection to my children, did I fail to supervise and encourage them? Do I pray and make sacrifices for them? Am I a bad example and a disgrace to my children? Am I irreconcilable and in hatred with relatives and neighbours? Did I listen to and respect church dignitaries, the pope, bishops, priests? Have I mocked, scorned, or slandered them? Did I participate in some lectures where people spoke against living in faith and against the truths of our faith? 5. God's commandment: Do not kill Did I insult, curse, beat or mistreat someone? Am I inclined to constantly humiliate my neighbour, speak ill of him? Was I envious of someone or did I wish evil, did I rejoice in someone else's misfortune? Was I jealous, did I hate someone, did I take revenge on someone, did I refuse to forgive another? Was I grumpy, angry, angry and angry with myself and my neighbours? Was I

envious, selfish, and stingy? Did I give someone a bad example or bad advice? Did I approve, advice, advocate or commit an abortion? Did I attempt murder or suicide? Did I commit murder?

Did I harm my physical and spiritual health by abusing drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, excessive food intake, unnecessary diets due to self-love and self-indulgence?

Did I waste my nights in smoky inns and discos in debaucheries parties, and then spend my days sleeping?

Did I spend hours and hours with television and the Internet?

Did I constantly drive the vehicle without following the traffic rules and thus endanger my life and that of others?

Did I fail to help my loved ones in need?

Have I neglected to correct with good actions the one who curses, speaks simple words or commits other grave sins?

Did I neglect responsibilities and help or was I excessively absent from my family?

Have I neglected discipline and order in my life and in the life of my family?

6. God's commandment: Do not commit adultery and 9. God's commandment: Do not covet someone else's spouse

Did I intentionally support immoral thoughts, views, and desires?

Have I led others to the sin of fornication with looks, words, bad example, provocative dressing?



Have I sinned promiscuously? Have I committed the sin of self-indulgence?

Have I committed fornication with persons of the opposite sex who are not married or with persons who are married, with persons of the same sex?

Did I read shameless books and magazines, watch such movies and recommend them to others?

Have I watched pornographic films, Internet or TV programs that are seductive?

Did I hang out with bad company and go to dissolute parties, visit brothels, engage in prostitution?

Was I unfaithful to my spouse and committed adultery by act, word, desire?

In my married life, did I fail to adhere to the moral law and prevent the conception of a child by throwing semen, various contraceptives, an IUD, which is an abortifacient?

Have I behaved selfishly towards my spouse in intimate relationships?

7. God's commandment: Do not steal and 8. God's commandment: Do not covet other people's things

Have I stolen anything from anyone, if so, what did I steal and how much was it worth? Did I keep the stolen item?

Have I cheated anyone in sales and purchases or any business?

Did I do any damage to my neighbor and did I fail to compensate for the damage?



Have I neglected to repay the debt? Did I repay my debts on time?

Did I harm a subordinate with an unfair salary, did I accept a bribe?

Did I harm the employer? Am I absent from work without justification?

Did I engage in usury, did I envy others and covet other people's goods?

Have I revealed to others a trusted secret or a hidden sin of a neighbor, passed on bad things from someone's life?

Have I bad-mouthed and judged someone, and only based on what I heard from others?

10. God's commandment: Do not bear false witness

Did I lie, did my lie harm my neighbor? Did I swear falsely, testify falsely, did I falsely and unfairly accuse or slander someone?

Did I divulge secrets, criticize, doubt, and make too hasty judgments?

Was I insincere and bragging? Was I falsely humble, pretending to be better than I really am? Did I make false promises?

Have I taken away someone's good reputation or appropriated it on someone else's merits?

Did I criticize the other and thereby wound both myself and my neighbor, and put others in an opportunity to judge?

## SACRAMENTS:

Did I go to confession and take communion as commanded during the Easter season?

Did I receive Holy Communion while I was in grave sin?

Did I deliberately keep silent about a grave sin in past confessions?

Divorced and unmarried persons who do not live in purity commit a grave sin and therefore cannot receive the sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion.

Did I neglect the sacraments and justify myself lightly?

## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

Do I love my neighbors regardless of their position, attractiveness, differences, as they are, and not for what they have, do or look like? Do I strive for unity in love with them?

Was I in solidarity with everyone, especially the poor, the sick, the old, the insignificant, the weak, the infirm? Am I patient, kind, gentle, a peacemaker with everyone?

Did I try to immediately forgive and forget the insult?

With my brothers and sisters, was I one who serves or one who waits to be served?

Have I tried to give my time to the needy, the humble, and the insignificant?

Did I truly care for freedom and justice so that I share my goods with the needy and fight against all injustice in an evangelical spirit?

Did I easily suspect my neighbor instead of justifying everything, believing in everything, hoping for everything, enduring everything?

Have I tried to forget myself in order to seek Christ in my neighbors or am I constantly satisfying my urge to egoistically love and be loved?

MAIN SINS:

ARROGANCE

Did I ask for admiration and praise, and did not tolerate criticism and remarks or admonitions?

Did I consider myself righteous, thought that others were worse than me, and did not want to admit that I was sinful?

Did I yearn for the first places, for reputation, power, leadership, authority?

Did I give importance to myself and others through illegal means and ways?

Have I elevated or degraded others? Did I rejoice in the neglect of others, and never tried to forget myself in order to give importance to others?

AVARICE

Did I selfishly care for myself and my personal prosperity as the goal of life?

Did I try to overcome my selfishness by being friendly and opening my heart to everyone? Did I abuse the gifts that were given to me, squander them, keep them for my own?

Did I help my neighbors in need, and if I did, was it only out of what was already superfluous to me?

Was I constantly complaining about my life, relationships, work?

Do I believe in God's great love and providence?

## **FORNICATION**

Did I behave with dignity in my sexuality or was I adopting a mentality according to which everything is allowed?

Did I ignore the truth that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and does not belong to me, and that every impure act of mine tarnishes the body of Christ and the community?

Did I neglect mercy, love, and the true purpose of my life and forget how I will be judged by it?

## **ENVY**

Was I bitter because of the goods and success of others, did I enjoy the evil of my neighbor?

Was I jealous, envious or in rivalry with brothers, relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues at work?

Have I refused to accept that work is done with humble and constant effort and that effort is necessary for true prayer?

Was I duplicitous with myself and with others, pretending to love and thus concealing my interests and self-interest?

## **INTEMPERANCE IN EATING AND DRINKING**

Did I eat disorderly, harming my health and that of others?

Did I take drugs, drink alcohol excessively and smoke,  
harming my health?

Are food and drink so important to me that because of them  
God, prayer and the Holy Mass take a secondary place in my  
life?

### ANGER

Did I lose my patience in my family, with friends, colleagues?

Did I fail to show respect to my family, friends, and  
colleagues?

Have I cursed anyone in the family, at work, on the street,  
wishing him harm? Have I been sanctified even for the  
smallest injustice?

Was I angry? Was I angry with the Lord for what was  
happening to me?

### LAZINESS

Due to my own laziness, have I neglected my duties as a  
husband, father, brother, wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend,  
female friend, worker, citizen, etc.?

Have I been content to live in laziness and neglected the love  
of the truth? Have I indifferently neglected the values of the  
gospel and failed to spread and defend them?

Did I neglect prayer and the sacraments, failed to nourish my  
spiritual life, because I did not have the will to do so?

Have I neglected to care for the general Church and the parish community to which I belong?

Finish the examination of conscience, think how much you have offended the good God, how personally responsible you are for the suffering of Jesus Christ, and then ask for forgiveness through an act of repentance.

### REPENTANCE

Pain because of the offense I caused to God, my neighbor and myself.

The pain due to committed sins consists in repenting for them, because we offended God, made Jesus suffer and suffer until death on the cross, offended and did evil to our neighbor and ourselves, and deserved hell. The pain due to committed sins is a very important part of the holy confession, because if it is not present, the confession is void or blasphemous.

### DECISION

The decision consists in a firm desire not to sin again. If it is missing, it means that there is no remorse, no pain due to sins, therefore they cannot be forgiven, on the contrary, they increase even more, because a bad confession and then an unworthy communion are too serious sins or sacrilege.

If, after promising the Lord that we will not offend him again, after some time we fall into sin again, we go to the holy confession again and do it properly.

### THE ACT OF HOLY CONFESSION

Confession and condemnation of sins before the priest. Conviction of sin consists in showing the sin to the confessor in order to give us absolution.

If someone, out of shame or superficiality, conceals a mortal sin during confession and does not confess it, he will commit a bad confession and another very serious sin of sacrilege.

If someone has not confessed a grave sin due to forgetfulness, his confession is valid; all his sins will be forgiven, including the forgotten one, but he remains obliged to confess them properly at the next confession.

## PENANCE

Penance consists in a good deed ordered by the confessor to atone for the sins we have confessed. Penance should be performed properly as soon as possible. Neglecting the spiritual dimension leads us to the sin of omission, and then to more and more serious sins in thought, word and deed.

And our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Man does not live by bread alone, but also by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. Seek first the kingdom of God, and everything else will be added to you."