

An Examination of Conscience for Teenagers based on the Seven Deadly Sins

by Fr. Dylan James, 19-3-2011

Check out Fr. Dylan's homilies: <http://fatherdylanjames.blogspot.co.uk>

5 STEPS FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

1. Examine your conscience –recall the sins that you have committed since your last good confession.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins to the priest.
4. Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of them.
5. After confession, do the penance the priest gives to you.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my 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, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Sins of omission: "In what I have done, **and** in what I have failed to do"-sins of omission may be more serious than sins of commission

- e.g. Have I omitted to say my prayers?
- Have I omitted to look for and respond to the needs of my friends?

Thought: "In thought, word, and deed"

- e.g. Even if I did not gossip in word, did I judge someone in thought?

Each area of my life should be considered:

- e.g. My family, my friends, school life, study

Anagram: PLACES-G (the seven deadly sins):

Pride, Lust, Anger, Covetousness, Envy, Sloth, Gluttony

Pride (c.f. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II q162)

Pride is the mother of all sin

- Have I dwelt on the failings of others?
- Have I **judged** others, in my thoughts or words?
- Have I ranked myself better than others?
- Have I borne hatred for others?
- Have I refused to learn from others?
- Have I been **stubborn**? Refused to admit I was wrong? Refused to accept that another person had a better idea?
- Have I been **arrogant**?
- Have I refused to admit my own weaknesses?
- Have I held others in contempt?

Pusillanimity –the opposite of pride:

- Have I neglected to use the talents that God has given me?

Vanity (ST II-II q132)

Vanity is excessive concern about what others think of me –not just what they think of my appearance

Have I been overly concerned about what others think of me? Have I allowed this to motivate my actions?

Have I lied or exaggerated to make myself look good?

Have I wasted undue time and money on clothes and appearance?

Have I exercised in a vain manner, or with an excessive concern to make my body perfect?

Have I been content with my lowly position?

Lust (ST II-II q.153; CCC 2351)

Lust is disordered desire for sexual pleasure, isolated from its procreative and unitive purpose (CCC 2351)

Custody of the Eyes: "Whoever looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28)

Have I viewed other people as mere sexual objects rather than as persons to be loved?

Pornography: On internet? or TV? or books?

Impure Thoughts:

Have I entertained impure thoughts?

Have I consented to impure thoughts?

Impure Words:

Conversation? Jokes?

Impure Acts:

Alone: Impure touches?

Incomplete or complete impure acts?

Impure touches with boy/girlfriend?

Have I flirted/toyed with the feelings of another?

Anger/Wrath (ST II-II q158)

Anger is undue desire for vengeance -undue in cause or in amount

Have I harboured resentment, grudges, and hatred in my thoughts?

Have I nurtured imaginary angry conversations?

Have I been slow to forgive?

Have I lost my temper?

Impatience:

How have I carried my cross?

Have I been impatient with people, family, events, sufferings, sicknesses?

Covetousness/Avarice (ST II-II q118)

Avarice is the excessive love of possessing things

Have I cheated, stolen, or failed to return things that I borrowed?

Did I borrow things without permission?

Have I been generous and cheerful in giving?

Have I wasted money?

Envy/Jealousy (ST II-II q36)

Envy –is sadness at the happiness of another

Have I envied or been jealous of the abilities, talents, ideas, good-looks, intelligence, clothes, possessions, money, friends, family, of others?

Gossip: Have I judged others in my thoughts?

Have I damaged the reputation of another person by my words, attitude, or looks?

Have I repeated accusations that might not be true? Have I exaggerated?

Have I said things that were true but that I nonetheless should have kept private?

Have I failed to defend the reputation of others?

Have I failed to keep secrets?

Do I despise others of different race or class?

Lies: Have I lied or exaggerated?

Sloth/Apathy (ST II-II q35)

Laziness, especially in the things of God. Sloth is a sorrow in the face of spiritual good -it makes you lethargic and want to do nothing.

Have I sought God above all else, or have I put other priorities ahead of him? (e.g. friendships, ambition, comfort and ease)

Have I got so caught up in the things of this world that I've forgotten God?

Have I attended Mass each and every Sunday?

Have I neglected to say my daily prayers?

Have I entertained distractions in prayer, or failed to give God due concentration in prayer or Mass?

(Note: Not giving God the **effort** He deserves in prayer is a sin, but it is not the same thing as *involuntary* weakness in mental distractions.)

Have I made a prayerful preparation before Mass and a good thanksgiving after Mass?

Have I risked losing my faith/piety by bad company, bad reading, cowardice, or pride?

Have I trusted God, especially in difficulty?

Have I received Holy Communion while in a state of serious sin? Have I neglected to seek

Confession before Holy Communion?

Have I taken the Lord's name in vain? Or used other foul language?

My Neighbour:

Have I been lazy in helping others?

Have I been attentive to the needs of my friends?

Has my conversation been focussed on my own pleasure, or on others?

Has my humour been insensitive to others?

My Family:

Have I been more focused on myself than on the needs of others in my family?

Have I neglected to help at home?

I have quarrelled needlessly?

Have I been pointlessly stubborn?

Have I given a bad or lazy example to younger family members?

Punctuality and Discipline:

Have I wasted other people's time by being late?

Have I made good use of my time, or have I wasted time needlessly? E.g. TV or internet or reading?

Have I gone to sleep on time?

Have I planned good use of relaxation and recreation, knowing that I need to rest well?

Have I studied as much as I should?

Gluttony (ST II-II q148)

Gluttony is the inordinate desire for food.

Have I eaten more than I need?

To how serious an extent?

Have I drunk alcohol excessively?

Have I driven after drinking?

Have I eaten greedily and with little consideration for those at table with me?

Have I regularly practiced fasting and self-denial, especially on Fridays? Have I eaten meat on

Fridays? Have I always fasted an hour before receiving Holy Communion at Mass?

The Ten Commandments:

- (1) I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
- (2) You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain.
- (3) Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
- (4) Honour your father and your mother.
- (5) You shall not kill.
- (6) You shall not commit adultery.
- (7) You shall not steal.
- (8) You shall not bear false witness.
- (9) You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
- (10) You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.