

# An Examination of Conscience based on the Seven Deadly Sins

by Fr. Dylan James

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 family?

*Thought:* "In thought, word, and deed"

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

*Each area of my life should be considered:*

- e.g. My family, my friends, my work, my prayer, those I work and live with, etc.

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

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

## Pride (ST II-II q162)

*Pride is the mother of all sin*

- Have I refused to admit my own weaknesses?  
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 another?  
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 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 been content with my lowly position, or have I resented the role that Christ asks of me?

## 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?

*Impure Acts:*

Alone, or with another?

*Impure Words:* Jokes? Conversation?

## 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 been overly concerned about my own comfort and well-being?

Have I been resentful of my lack of money?

Have I been generous in giving? Have I given with a cheerful heart?

Have I cheated, stolen, or failed to pay my bills on time?

Have I used people for my own ends and advantage?

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 failed to defend the reputation of others?

Have I failed to keep secrets?

Do I despise others of different race, class or culture?

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

Have I trusted God, especially in times of difficulty?

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 in the

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 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 neighbour, the needs of my family?

Has my conversation been focused 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?

Have I spent time with my family? How have I manifested my concern for them? Have I been forgiving and tolerant of them? Have I scandalized them by a bad or lazy example?

Punctuality and Discipline:

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

Have I sinned against God and the congregation by being late for Mass?

Have I gone to sleep on time?

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

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

### **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 spent excessive money on food?

Have I drunk alcohol excessively?

Have driven after drinking?

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

Have I given money to help the hungry?

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

Have I abstained from 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 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.