

# EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE BEFORE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

*We have sinned before the Lord, and have disobeyed him, and have not heeded  
the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the statutes of the Lord  
which he set before us. ~ Baruch 1:17-18*

**B**ELOW IS A SUGGESTED WAY of examining your conscience in preparation for a fruitful confession of sin. It is based on the Ten Commandments and gives examples of the kinds of sins that tend to be committed against each of those divine precepts.

## **I. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have false gods before me.**

- ❖ Have I put money, popularity, material things or any other good above my relationship with God?
- ❖ Have I rejected God's revelation to me of who he is or what he wants me to do?
- ❖ Have I rejected God's revelation as it comes to me through the Church's teachings?
- ❖ Have I tried to turn away from a vocation to which God might be calling me?
- ❖ Have I despaired of God's help or provision for me in my times of need?
- ❖ Have I presumed upon God's forgiveness when I decided to do something sinful?
- ❖ Have I used things that are superstitious, occult, or related to witchcraft?



*Jesus walking on the sea, by James Tissot,  
1856-1902*

*“Examining your  
conscience prepares for  
a fruitful confession  
of sin.”*

## **II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

- ❖ Have I used the name of the Lord in vain, or in any other improper way?
- ❖ Have I made false oaths or failed to keep a promise made in God's sight?
- ❖ Have I disrespected the holiness of God and/or of persons or things that are specially associated with God (like priests, sacred objects, the parish buildings, etc.)?

## **III. You shall keep holy the Sabbath day.**

- ❖ Have I failed through my own fault to not worship God on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation by attending Mass?
- ❖ Have I failed to make an effort to keep Sunday holy by spending time with my family, spending extra time in prayer or in charitable activities, resting from the work of the week?
- ❖ Have I failed to make an effort to pray regularly and attentively throughout the week?

## **IV. You shall honor your father and your mother.**

- ❖ Have I been disrespectful of my parents (and stepparents, grandparents or other family members)?

*"Have I rejected God?"*



- ❖ Have I been disrespectful of others placed in authority over me?

**V. You shall not kill.**

- ❖ Have I contributed to or concurred in any way with the taking of human life through abortion, euthanasia, or other means?
- ❖ Have I done damage to another's well-being in any way?
- ❖ Have I jeopardized myself through use of drugs, alcohol or some other self-destructive behavior?
- ❖ Have I hoped that bad things or ill fate would befall another?
- ❖ Have I harbored anger or hatred so intense as to wish to harm another?
- ❖ Have I done anything that gives bad example to others and might lead them to fall into sin?

**VI. and IX. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

- ❖ Have I engaged in willful sexual intercourse outside of marriage?
- ❖ Within marriage have I engaged in sexual activity without regard for expressing true love for my spouse?
- ❖ Within marriage have I engaged in sexual activity without openness to the possibility of receiving the gift of human life (using contraception)?
- ❖ Have I pursued and entertained lustful thoughts?
- ❖ Have I been careless about the sexual content of

materials I read or view in books, on the Internet, or on TV?

- ❖ Has my marriage been celebrated outside the Catholic Church or without permission of the Catholic Church?

**VII. and X. You shall not steal. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

- ❖ Have I failed to respect the property of others, both in my family and outside of it?
- ❖ Have I failed to share my resources with those less fortunate than me?
- ❖ Have I failed to pay a just wage or failed to give my employer a day's work for a day's pay?
- ❖ Have I been unhappy with the blessings that God has given me or envied another? Am I jealous of what others have?
- ❖ Have I tried to get the things, clothes, etc. that I see others having/wearing, just because they have them?

**VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

- ❖ Have I told lies? Have I gossiped?
- ❖ Have I tried to destroy someone's reputation by lying?
- ❖ Have I told others someone's faults without serious reason to do so?
- ❖ Have I made assumptions about others' faults?

(CCC 1454)