

# Examination of Conscience for Women ♡

Based on the Seven Deadly Sins  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church § 1866*

*blessed is she*

## SLOTH

- Have I used words that demean God, the Church, or His Saints?
- Have I willingly missed Mass on Sunday or on a Holy Day of Obligation?
- Have I left Mass early without sufficient reason?
- Have I failed to show my parents proper respect?
- Have I neglected my duties to my husband and my children?
- Have I neglected to care for myself?
- Have I taken or wasted time or resources at work, school, or home?
- Have I broken a promise or failed to live up to my responsibilities in a contract?
- Have I been lazy in my duties to God, my family, or my work?
- Have I neglected to spend time with God in prayer?

## ENVY

- Have I spread false rumors or gossiped about someone?
- Have I rejoiced in the difficult circumstances of another?
- Have I been overly critical or judgmental?
- Have I resisted my current vocation or state in life?
- Have I been jealous or envious of another's blessings, ignoring the gifts I have been given?
- Have I been reckless or careless with my money or possessions?
- Have I made purchases out of a desire to keep pace with my peers?

## GREED

- Have I placed people, achievements, or things (possessions) before God in my life?
- Have I allowed someone or something to direct my decisions against God's guidance and will?
- Have I engaged in occult activity (New Age practices or superstition such as consulting a psychic, tarot cards, ouija board, etc. or the worship of Satan)?
- Have I supported, advised, participated in, or had an abortion? Euthanasia?
- Have I used artificial contraception? Have I avoided conception without serious reason?
- Have I placed value of material possessions over spiritual growth?
- Have I failed to be grateful for what I have?
- Have I shared the gifts that God has given me with the Church and those who are less fortunate?

## PRIDE

- Have I refused to accept and live by the revelation of God and the teachings of the Catholic Church?
- Have I denied the existence of God? Have I formally left the Catholic Church?
- Have I presumed on the mercy of God (committing a sin with the expectation of God's mercy)? Or, conversely, have I despaired of God's mercy (thinking I am beyond the healing mercy of God)?
- Have I knowingly received Communion in a state of mortal sin?
- Have I shown disrespect for those in authority, both in the Church and in the government?
- Have I attempted to commit suicide?
- Have I despised myself or the gifts I have been given because I compare myself to others?
- Have I supported or engaged in acts against human life such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, or (unnecessary) sterilization?
- Have I refused to show respect toward someone because of their race, gender, nationality, or religion?
- Have I cheated in any way (on a test, in sports, in business)?
- Have I embellished stories or lied to make myself look good or others look bad?

## GLUTTONY

- Have I busied myself on the Lord's Day, not observing that it is a day of rest in the Lord?
- Have I neglected the hour-long fast before receiving the Eucharist without sufficient reason?
- Have I refused to fast or abstain on the designated fasting days without sufficient reason?
- Have I put the lives of others in danger by driving recklessly, distractedly, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- Have I consumed more food or drink than I need?
- Have I abused illegal or prescription drugs? Have I abused alcohol?
- Have I purposefully withheld material goods from those in need, even when I have an excess?

## LUST

- Have I respected the sexual dignity of others and myself?
- Have I willingly viewed pornography?
- Have I committed adultery or engaged in sexual activity outside the context of marriage (whether by entertaining thoughts or by action)?
- Have I engaged in homosexual acts?
- Have I masturbated?
- Have I failed to give my husband my exclusive love and attention?
- Have I been flirtatious with someone who is not my husband (if married); or have I flirted with someone who is married to another (if single)?
- Have I watched movies or TV shows, read books, or listened to music that degrades the sexual dignity of the human person or encourages sexual impurity?
- Have I willingly put myself in a near occasion of sexual sin either by myself or with someone else?

## ANGER

- Have I used vulgar language, especially about or directed toward another person?
- Have I criticized anyone without first approaching their shortcomings with compassion?
- Have I harmed another person (including myself) physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually?
- Have I hated another person or wished evil upon someone?
- Have I withheld marital intimacy from my husband as a form of manipulation or punishment?
- Have I withheld forgiveness, even when it is actively sought from me? Have I refused to seek forgiveness when I have hurt someone?
- Have I sought revenge?



# Heavenly Virtues

After bringing your sins to the mercy of Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession, examine the areas of your life in which you most need grace to avoid those sins in the future.

*If you're struggling in a particular area, pray for an increase of the contrary virtue in your soul.*

## WHAT TO CULTIVATE

If you struggle with Sloth, cultivate Hope and Diligence.

If you struggle with Envy, cultivate Love and Gratitude.

If you struggle with Greed, cultivate Faith and Generosity.

If you struggle with Pride, cultivate Justice and Humility.

If you struggle with Gluttony, cultivate Contentment and Temperance.

If you struggle with Lust, cultivate Prudence and Chastity.

If you struggle with Anger, cultivate Fortitude and Meekness.

# How to Go to Confession

## 1. EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE

The first step in the Sacrament of Reconciliation comes before our confession begins. It's important to take the time to examine our conscience. We pause and reflect on our life and look for the ways we have done wrong or failed to do good. The important part of this process is to reflect on our sorrow over our sins and how they have hurt Christ or others in our life.

Once you've examined your conscience, you're ready to celebrate the Sacrament!

## 2. PICK YOUR PREFERENCE

Depending on where you go to Confession, you might have the option to either sit with Father face-to-face or to kneel or sit behind a screen, keeping your identity anonymous. Either way is acceptable and no one way is better than the other.

Of course, the beautiful thing about Confession is that it can be celebrated anywhere. That means you might not have this option if you're going to Confession in an airport or outside or in a restaurant.

## 3. GREETING AND BLESSING

Father will usually greet you with a smile and will open by blessing you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

At this point, it is common to let the priest know how long it has been since your last Confession. If you can't remember exactly, an estimate is fine.

## 4. CONFESSIONS OF SINS

Here's where you list your sins. If you can recall, let the priest know how many times you've committed each sin. It helps him understand what you struggle with most.

It can be difficult and, frankly, embarrassing to admit our sins. But let me offer some comfort. There is no sin that a priest has not heard confessed. I promise that nothing we say will shock the priest, and he will not judge us. Most priests forget our specific sins (think of all the Confessions they hear!), so we don't need to worry about him thinking horrible things about us the next time we see him at the fish fry.

## 5. ACCEPTANCE OF PENANCE

After you've listed your sins, the priest will take a few minutes to offer guidance or reflection. Then, he will give you a penance to be performed in reparation for your sins.

Sometimes our penance is a list of prayers offered for specific intentions. Sometimes it's an act of love to be completed. Ideally, our penances will correspond with our sins, offering us another opportunity to choose Jesus over sin.

## 6. ACT OF CONTRITION

Once the priest has given you your penance, he will ask you to make an Act of Contrition. There are so many beautiful Acts of Contrition available to us, and we can even make one up on the spot. Here's a lovely one to keep on hand:

*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 I have offended 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.*

## 7. PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

After you pray your Act of Contrition, Father will pray the Prayer of Absolution over you:

*God, the Father of mercies,  
through the Death and Resurrection of his Son  
has reconciled the world to himself  
and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins;  
through the ministry of the Church  
may God grant you pardon and peace.  
And I absolve you from your sins,  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.*

This prayer holds such beauty, freedom, and healing. It's my favorite part of the Sacrament.

## 8. PERFORM YOUR PENANCE

The final part of Confession is fulfilling our penance. Sometimes this can be done rather quickly in church after the Sacrament, and sometimes it takes more intention and time.

*blessed is she*