Examination of Conscience – for souls growing in Gospel living and charity

“Because I am united to Jesus, I must be faithful always and everywhere, and I must be interiorly united with the Lord…” - St. Faustina Kowalska

Fidelity to Prayer

- Do I set aside dedicated time to pray each day?
  - In a prayerful manner or begrudgingly just “checking it off my list”?
  - For an amount of time suitable to my state in life (vocation) and my calling to prayer?
  - Am I faithful to the Sacraments?
    - Sundays and Holy Days?
    - Regular Confession?
- Am I prayerful throughout the day?
  - Do I seek the Lord’s will in daily decisions or opportunities?
  - Do I try to notice the movement of the Holy Spirit throughout the day, or do I get too engaged in what I’m doing from moment-to-moment to be open to reflection?
  - Do I take advantage of silent times as opportunities to connect with God, or do I rapidly start doing something to fill the silence?
  - Do I try to keep the spirit of the Lord’s Day?

Right Order

- Do I serve myself more than the Lord?
  - Do I seek possessions, money, prestige, or people with more devotion than God?
- Am I handling my time commitments properly?
  - Are my priorities rightly ordered? (Where does most of my time go?)
- Do I waste time?
  - Excessive tv?
  - Excessive social media?
  - Excessive attention to news, politics, or celebrities?
  - Idle chatter?
  - Zoning out for long periods of time?
- Do I make an idol of comfort?
  - Do I put my comfort before God, family, or neighbor: e.g. luxury items to excess, like excessive tech, indulgent services or food, clubs, designer clothing or accessories, obsessive attention to car/home/office/physical appearance, etc.
- Do I procrastinate such that it becomes a burden on myself or others?
- Do I avoid making commitments to others “in case something better” comes up?
- Do I engage in petty vanities?
  - Speaking too much and dominating conversations?
  - Seeking out the best options for myself? (Most comfortable chair, best slice of pie, preferred seat in the car, favored places to go)
    - At the expense of others’ preferences?
    - Without considering I may offer up a small sacrifice for the Lord?
  - Do I hold onto trivial attachments (demanding a certain way of washing the dishes, always being the one to define the rules, reserving this or that for myself)?
Omissions of all kinds (a smile, a word of gratitude, offering to help someone in need, expressing an unpopular but virtuous point of view)

- Do I use the Lord’s name lightly and without respect? Or out of anger or frustration?
- Have I rejected Church teaching or authority, preferring my own ideas?
  - Have I intentionally tried to learn more about my faith questions or doubts, or have I remained willfully ignorant (due to laziness, lack of interest, or pride)?

**Love of Neighbor**

- Do I gossip?
  - From pride (thinking I am better than others)?
  - From jealousy (wishing I had something another has)?
  - From envy (wishing someone else didn’t have something)?
  - From vanity (trying to make myself look better by making another look worse)?
- Do I have undue curiosity about others?
  - Or undue curiosity about how others perceive me?
- Have I been warm and cordial toward everyone?
  - Those I do not know?
  - Those who are unattractive or set apart?
  - Those who are cruel, cold, or indifferent toward me?
- Do I respond to others with charity?
  - Am I oversensitive?
  - Am I insensitive?
  - Am I patient?
  - Do I live more by feelings than my will?
  - Am I living in fear that more will be asked of me than what I can offer?
- Have I stolen, illegally downloaded, cheated, reneged on a promise for selfish reasons, lied, or “tweaked” the truth for my own benefit?
- Do I hold racist, sexist, classist, or other prejudices?
- Do I care for God’s creation as entrusted to me?
  - Do I waste food or water?
  - Do I attempt to reuse or recycle what I reasonably can?
  - Have I wasted, lost, or vandalized things on purpose or out of laziness?
- Do I serve the Church or only myself?
  - Do I participate at Mass?
  - Do I volunteer/offer my time to help anyone in any aspect of my life?
  - Do I tithe regularly and to the extent that I am called?
  - Do I expect to receive everything from Church, but give little (or nothing)?
  - Do I care for the poor, those in need?
  - Do I defend the most vulnerable? The unborn, those with special needs, the elderly, the refugee, the mentally or physically ill?
- Do I provide appropriate care for my family members?
  - Children, aging parents, other family in need?
- Have I led or encouraged others to sin (purposefully or through my neglect)?
  - Through substance use, gossip, manipulation, or inappropriate dress or conversation?

**Interior Life**
• Am I vain?
  o Do I try to make myself look better to others, so that they think highly of me?
  o Do I spend excessive time trying to analyze what another person is thinking about me in order to “look good” in their eyes, or to get something I want from them?
  o Do I accept criticism, or do I ignore it without consideration because I think I’m always right?
• How am I living out the Gospel virtues?
  o Humility vs. Pride?
  o Patience vs. Impatience?
  o Love and care of neighbor vs. Indifference?
  o Care of the poor, the orphan, and the widow vs. Neglect?
  o Detachment from personal property vs. Possessive hoarding?
  o Trust vs. Fear?
  o Hope in God vs. Despair?
• In my daily duties, are my motivations mixed? Are unworthy motives mingled with my worthy ones?
  o Do I help others just to receive something in return?
  o Do I perform works of charity only when someone is watching?
• Have I been chaste in thought?
  o Sight? (pornography and real life)?
  o Reading?
  o Speaking? (including jokes)
  o Actions?
• Do I use anything or anyone to the point of abuse?
  o Substances, food, sexuality, work, money, or power?
• How is my attitude?
  o Towards God?
    ▪ Those with whom I live?
    ▪ Those with whom I work?
    ▪ Family, Friends?
    ▪ Myself, a beloved child of the Father?
    ▪ Those in authority over me? (Parents, bosses, superiors, etc.)
• Am I a person of integrity?
  o Do I have an inflated sense of self?
  o Am I watchful against illusions that I am more virtuous than I really am?
  o Or am I too hard on myself and deny the person God made me to be by making self-deprecating comments and decisions?
• Where is my focus: earth or heaven?
  o Do I seek things for themselves (I want to use or possess them) or as a means of leading myself and others to God?
• Do I suffer daily crosses like a disciple of the crucified Christ?
  o With acceptance and love?
  o With a cheerful spirit?
  o With gratitude for the union with Christ?
• Do I forgive others?
  o Or at least desire to forgive with an openness to be united with Christ?
  o Do I try to make acts of the will to forgive?
• Do I pray for those who have wronged me?
  • Do I try to treat him/her with kindness?
    o Have I harbored grudges or resentments?
• Do I forgive myself?
  o Do I let go of my past sins, trusting in God’s infinite love and mercy?
• Do I aim for perfect contrition (sorrow and avoidance of sin)?
  o Do I intend to overcome my sins?
  o Do I take appropriate steps to avoid what leads me to sin?
  o Do I ask the Lord for the grace to sin no more?
  o Do I seek a deepening of my relationship with God?
• Have I made my Confessions with candor and docility?
  o Have I asked (and listened to) the Holy Spirit when examining my conscience?
  o Have I been honest and up front about my sins, or tried to make myself look better by surrounding sins with excuses?
  o Have I ensured my worthy reception of the Blessed Sacrament? (e.g. not receiving Communion in a state of mortal sin)
• Do I trust in God’s love for me?

Have I loved well according to my state in life?

For those married:

• Do I give myself to my spouse:
  o Freely?
    ▪ Do I love my spouse with tenderness, or do I use attitudes like warmth and coldness to manipulate?
    ▪ Do I love my spouse without conditions?
    ▪ Do I give myself/receive my spouse freely and respectfully without using or withholding sex as a manipulation? Have we communicated about this?
  o Fruitfully?
    ▪ Am I open to accepting children as the fruit of this loving union, or do we use contraception or sexual acts closed to life in order to limit God’s involvement in our lives?
    ▪ Even within NFP, do I trust that God knows what my family needs?
  o Faithfully?
    ▪ Do I reserve sexual expression for my spouse alone?
    ▪ Do I reserve a preferential, intimate (emotional) love for my spouse alone?
  o Totally?
    ▪ Do I pay attention to my spouse’s (and my own) emotional, spiritual, and physical needs as a part of my love?
      • Verbal communication with my spouse
      • Sharing emotional concerns and needs
      • Prayer as a couple
      • Equity/agreement about joint roles in the home with housework, responsibilities, child rearing, and finances
- Quality time together and apart (allowing for introverted alone time and time with other friends)
- Regular affirmation of love in both word and deed
- Am I available to my spouse? (Or always “busy”)
- Do I love my spouse generously, or do I only give the minimum required?
- Do I strive for the witness of my marriage to display the love of God to those in my family and my community?
- Do I sacrifice for my spouse and children as a cheerful giver?
- Do I teach my children about our faith?
- Do I strive to correct my children’s misbehaviors with love?
- Do I give my best self to God and to my family?
  - Or who or what is consistently receiving the best of me?

For those in the single vocations:
- Am I faithful to God as my ever-present partner and companion in life?
  - Does God receive a preferential love in my life?
    - Do I believe God is enough for me?
    - Do I trust that God will satisfy me?
- Is my life centered on Jesus, who has set me apart for Himself?
  - Am I holding anything back from the Lord for myself?
  - Do I control everything in my life, or do I allow room to hear what the Lord is asking of me?
- Do I maintain healthy relationships with friends and family?
  - Do I recognize those whom God has placed in my life to offer me His love in particular ways?
  - Have I avoided unhealthy relationships?
  - Do I uphold chastity in line with my vocation?
- Do I try to model the love of Christ for His Church?
  - Do I seek to be an active member of a faith community?
  - Do I serve others, or do I expect others to serve me?
  - Do I allow others to serve me at times, or do I think I am above receiving help?
  - Am I a cheerful giver? Or do I sulk when I am asked to give?
  - Do I give of myself generously to others, or only to minimal extent that I am required?
- Am I available to God? (Or always “busy”)
- Am I available to others? (Or always “busy”)
- Am I being honest with myself about what I can reasonably handle? Or am I overextending myself to the point of being depleted?
- Am I faithful to the promises I’ve made to the Church (vows, public or private)?

With quotations and inspiration from the writings of St. Faustina’s Diary, St. Teresa of Avila’s The Way of Perfection, Pope St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, Thomas Dubay’s Seeking Spiritual Direction, and straight-up my wayward life.