



Examination of Conscience in the time of COVID

In recent months, the pandemic has made it difficult to access Mass and the Sacraments. Yet it has also brought us to recognize how easy it is to take for granted what is most life-giving. As we prepare for Christmas, many of us experience in a deeper way the need for Sacramental Confession and the hunger to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. We long to receive the peace that the Sacraments bring to our lives.

To help prepare our hearts for the Sacrament of Confession, the following questions may serve as an “examination of conscience in the time of COVID.” Though not all these points indicate “mortal sins,” they do help us see the real spiritual wounds and problems that can emerge in these times. They can encourage us to pause and reflect on our own lives during these months.

Since the early months of the pandemic, the Church has lifted the obligation of attending Sunday Mass. Yet, throughout this time, we are still invited and expected to honour the Lord’s Day.

- Have I tried to keep the Lord’s Day holy by praying and reading the Scriptures each week?
- Have I made efforts to gather my family in prayer? Have I taken the time to explain to my children what it means to not be able to attend Mass during this time?
- Have I made the effort to attend live-streamed Masses when available?
- If my situation allows for me to attend Mass in-person, have I made the effort to do so to be close to Jesus and receive Him? [If our specific circumstances indicate that we should continue avoiding public Masses, then we are not at fault.]

Let us consider our prayer life during this time of crisis; Amidst the pandemic restrictions, has our relationship with God has remained a priority?

- Have I prayed each day?
- Have I blamed God for this pandemic or used it as an excuse to turn away from Him?
- Have I continued to support my parish according to my means during this time?

In this pandemic, we have spent more time in our homes than we normally would. Naturally, this can cause increased anxieties and tensions that affect our most important relationships.

- How have I treated others during this time?
- Have I negatively affected others with my words and gestures, causing wounds and hurts even unintentionally?
- Have I made the effort to treat my family with greater care? With some family members working and learning from home, have I been flexible and generous with personal space and other life needs? Have I tried to live in service of my home to make life easier for all?
- Have I cared for the spiritual needs of my family? Have I taken the opportunity to talk about things like values, virtues, and beliefs to look after the spiritual health of my household?
- Have I reached out to family members who are elderly, isolated, or unsupported?



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In times of increased stress, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty, we turn to different things to help us cope.

- Have I coped in unhealthy ways such as excessive food or drink or even medication use?
- Have I used the internet or television to watch inappropriate or evil films? Are the things I look at on my devices shameful? Have I justified these habits with lies like, “it’s not a big deal?”
- Do I spend more time on my phone than with the people with whom I live?
- Have I allowed these unhealthy supports to become addictions?
- Have I allowed myself to become a more unloving person through the choices I have made?

We are always called to love our neighbour, even when the pandemic restrictions make it difficult to actively do so.

- How have I loved my neighbour during this time?
- Have I made the effort to care for the lonely, the elderly, and the poor around me?
- Have I only kept my attention on my needs or those of my immediate family?

The pandemic has led many of us to explore bigger questions such as the importance of family and friends and the reality of life and death.

- Have I taken the opportunity to reflect on my life and make real and necessary changes?
- Have I tried to live through these tough times by turning to Jesus who alone can take away my loneliness?
- Have I kept my faith strong in God, trusting that He remains near to me and always offers me what is best?

The pandemic has been difficult in many ways for all of us. Yet, this time is also a graced opportunity for us to reflect on our lives, to make significant resolutions, and to continue growing in our relationship with God who remains close to us.