

DAILY EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter. ~ Matthew 12:36

CONTINUING CONVERSION IS A DAILY NEED in the universal call to holiness. An examination of conscience each day helps us to love God more fully and to live as his child. Recalling personal sins daily helps us to see our weaknesses, areas of temptation, and repetitive sins, and in turn be able to ask God for help:

“For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who seeks finds” (Mt 7:8). This daily examination also serves to make us more sensitive to sin and so contrition (the sorrow for sins and firm intention to sin no more) grows in the heart. This increase in contrition prepares us for Reconciliation and for worthy reception of Holy Communion. Having spent this time examining his or her conscience, praying, and receiving the sacraments, the baptized person grows spiritually and is more able to battle against human weakness and the inclination to sin. Every daily examination of conscience should begin by asking God for his help in our weaknesses, areas of temptation, and repetitive sins, as if helping us *“render an account”* before the judgment seat (Mt 12:36).

To avoid being scrupulous, we should also ask God to help us keep in mind his *“abundant mercy”* (Ps 51:1) and *“his steadfast love”* (Ps 136).

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Reading Scripture passages helps in a proper attitude toward sin. The same text can be read every day, or others can be chosen for each new day. Some appropriate passages are the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), the works of mercy (Mt 25:31-46), the teaching on the Body of Christ and love (1 Cor 12-13),

the conduct of Christians (Rom 12-15; Eph 4-6), or the explanation of the fruits of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5). A few minutes spent considering our love of God, charity in relation to others and our responsibilities for this day will help keep us focused on what is most important each day. It will also serve to move us more frequently to God’s mercy: *“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness”* (Lam 3:22). Finally, this daily examination of conscience would best be concluded by a heartfelt Act of Contrition.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. In the name of Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, Lord. Amen.

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