

# Examination of Conscience

- ▶ What does this mean?
- ▶ An examination of conscience is a prayerful reflection on our actions in light of our faith in order to identify sins, patterns of sin, or ways that we are falling short of who God is calling us to be. Once we recognize our sins, we can ask God for forgiveness and healing.
- ▶ A good examination of conscience considers all areas of our lives—our thoughts and words, what we have done, and what we have failed to do (to paraphrase the Confiteor). Typically it consists of questions in three categories: the call to love God, the call to love others, and the call to love one's self.

# Three Tips for a Good Examination of Conscience

- ▶ **1. Ask for help.** We should pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten us about our sins, or ways that we have fallen short of being the person God is calling us to be.
- ▶ **2. Don't wait until the last minute.** If you use a written examination of conscience as a guide, post it on your bedroom wall, your fridge... a few days before going to receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- ▶ **3. Examine bad habits and opportunities for growth** Besides looking at the obvious sins we might have committed, we ought to consider broader patterns of behaviour, habits, attitudes, and ways we could grow in grace. We're called to be saints, each in his or her own way; we can think about the person God calls us to be, and what needs to happen to get there.

# Responsibilities to God

- ▶ Have I prayed every day?
- ▶ Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?
- ▶ Have I prayed with my parents and family?
- ▶ Have I been moody about praying and going to church?
- ▶ Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me whenever I have been tempted to sin?
- ▶ Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?

# Responsibilities to others

- ▶ Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?
- ▶ Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- ▶ Have I been arrogant, stubborn or rebellious?
- ▶ Have I talked back to parents, teachers or other adults?
- ▶ Have I been moody?
- ▶ Have I been selfish toward my parents, brothers, and sisters, teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?
- ▶ Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone?
- ▶ Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?
- ▶ Have I treated other children with respect or have I made fun of them and called them names?
- ▶ Have I used bad language?
- ▶ Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?
- ▶ Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?
- ▶ Have I been helpful and affectionate toward my family?
- ▶ Have I been kind and generous with my friends?

# Responsibilities to myself

# My own examination of conscience

- ▶ How does this help Christians to follow Christ?

## Act of Sorrow

O my God, I thank you for loving me.  
I am sorry for all my sins,  
for not loving others and not loving you.  
Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again.  
Amen