



WELCOME HOME

A 5-Day Plan for Your Best Confession Ever

OVERVIEW

Welcome to this Vincentian Examination of Conscience in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We're going to take 10 minutes each day this week and reflect upon our lives--look at our hearts, examine our choices and desires in light of our call from God to live as saints.

The 5 Vincentian Virtues will be our Guide with the help of the 10 Commandments.

THE PLAN

1. Find out when the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) is being offered at your parish. Usually it is on a Saturday afternoon. Make a commitment to go. Put it on your calendar.
2. Then on the Monday prior (in the morning) begin the 5 Day Examination. Each day a Virtue will help focus your reflection upon an area of your life for examination in light of the corresponding Commandment(s). A quote from Sacred Scripture will lead you into a few questions to ponder and reflect upon during the course of your day.
3. Before going to bed, write down the one sin, the one failing you've identified from your day's examination that needs to be forgiven. All will be absolved- you are just raising the one that weighs heavier than the others.
4. Tuesday through Friday the process continues with a new Virtue, new Commandment(s) and reflection questions. Each night write the ONE sin from your day's reflection. These are the 5 that will lead you to confession on Saturday.
5. The absolution of God in the sacrament is complete. God does not want a laundry list, he wants your DESIRE to be back Home in forgiveness. Having seen us all week in Examination upon that desire—our Father will embrace you completely, wholly and magnificently in the sacrament. Your best Confession ever!

MONDAY

Humility

Commandments:

- 1. I am the Lord your God; there is no other**
- 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain**



Humility acknowledges God as the source of all life and grace. St. Vincent de Paul attributed all of the good and success in his life to this virtue of HUMILITY. He writes in a letter, “Let us no longer say it is I who have done this good work...for it is God alone who is the author of every good thing.”

But we live in a society that says the opposite. It prizes pretty much everything having to do with the self—self-reliance, self-confidence, self-centeredness. We talk about my achievements and the things **I** have accomplished. We see ourselves as Number 1, first, and most important. Humility is the opposite of such self-involvement. NOT that we are small and unimportant—but that we are GREAT and REMARKABLE *because of* God who is our author, our creator. It is His spirit and presence burning within us that has, and will , accomplish all of the good and success in our lives.

"I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, THERE IS NO OTHER"

The first two commandments remind us to center our lives on God, avoiding the false gods of pride, control, or self-sufficiency. Humility leads us to submit to His will, recognizing our dependence on Him. It is the posture of a child before a loving Father, admitting that without Him, we can do nothing. In this way, we adore God, trust in His providence, and offer Him the reverence He is due.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Have I really loved God above all things? Have I made other things like money, clothes, TV, my phone, music, even pleasure, more important than God?
- Do I carelessly use His name in anger or without thought?
- Am I wholehearted in accepting and following God's teaching, or do I only pick and choose the parts of His message that please me?
- Have I made time for God each day for prayer? Is my time for myself, my work, and my relaxation more valuable than my time with God?



TUESDAY

Meekness

Commandments:

5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.



Meekness is not weakness. St. Vincent de Paul saw it as the opposite - it is strength tempered by gentleness. He often spoke of MEEKNESS not as cowardice or indifference, but as a willingness to bring blessing and healing to situations of hate and injustice. Instead of turning to violence or anger with retribution, St. Vincent calls us to meet anger with kindness, insults with patience, and discord with understanding. A meek heart restrains anger, violence, and destructive passions, choosing instead patience and understanding.

Today's society rewards assertiveness, strength and control. But instead, it is strength and courage under control and coupled with kindness. To be meek requires a RESERVOIR or inner strength that comes from Jesus. It is an outward expression of the Holy Spirit's transforming work in each of us. When we feel the urge to use anger or voice concern in aggressive ways, we exclude God and others. When we allow God to enter our heart and share feelings peacefully and respectfully; when we pray for meekness, it can lead to a greater understanding of our own limitations and can give us an increased sensitivity to others, to become more attuned to the needs and perspectives of others and foster stronger/better communication with others.

"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH" (Matthew 5:5)

The fifth and sixth commandments remind us of the sanctity of life and the dignity of human relationships. Meekness enables us to resist the temptation to harm others, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. It helps us cultivate purity of heart, ensuring that our thoughts and actions toward others are guided by respect, compassion, and faithful love.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Have I harbored anger, resentment, or hatred in my heart?
- Do I foster peace in my words and actions?
- Have I treated others as objects rather than persons made in God's image?



WEDNESDAY

Mortification

Commandments:

3. Keep holy the Sabbath.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.



Mortification, or self-denial, is the practice of disciplining our desires and attachments so that they may be rightly ordered toward God. For St. Vincent de Paul, mortification was essential to grow closer to God and compassionately serve those in need.

"IF ANYONE WISHES TO COME AFTER ME, HE MUST DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY AND FOLLOW ME" (Luke 9:23)

The third commandment invites us to resist the relentless pull of busyness and consumption by setting aside time solely for God. Attending Mass not only fulfills a religious obligation, but it also helps us to grow closer to God, provides us opportunities to engage in prayer and strengthen our communication with God. Mass provides us with spiritual nourishment and how to apply our faith in a meaningful way in our daily lives.

The ninth and tenth commandments caution against unchecked longing for what belongs to others. Mortification helps us quiet the noise of greed, envy, and restless longing, allowing our souls to find contentment in God alone. It teaches us that true freedom comes not from indulging every desire, but from mastering them in love.

We mortify our desires and selfish tendencies in order to open our hearts to God's presence and identify with Jesus, who gave up everything for our salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I honor the Lord's Day and dedicate time to rest in Him?
- Have I allowed jealousy or envy to cloud my contentment?
- Do I indulge desires that pull me away from holiness?



THURSDAY

Simplicity

Commandments:

- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not bear false witness.**



Simplicity, St. Vincent de Paul would often say, is “the virtue I love the most”. Because it most perfectly reflects the nature of God and His word, His Son, Jesus Christ. In simplicity we are invited to clear away the clutter in our lives to make room for God...and the things that truly matter. How can we live and speak simply for the Glory of God if we can't find Him? Or hear Him?

In today's materialistic society, it is easy to fall into greed and "keeping up with the Jones'." By prioritizing faith and spiritual growth over material things, we deepen our relationship with God and put our trust in Him that He will provide. In the same manner, gossip erodes trust, creates divide, and harms reputations. Instead, being mindful of our words and actions toward others can help us build good communication with others and draw us closer to God by building people up instead of tearing them down.

**"LET YOUR 'YES' MEAN 'YES' AND YOUR 'NO' MEAN 'NO.' ANYTHING MORE IS FROM THE EVIL ONE."
(Matthew 5:37)**

The seventh and eighth commandments call us to respect others' goods and reputations, practicing justice and honesty. A simple heart does not manipulate, lie, or grasp for more than is needed. Instead, it is content, transparent, and truthful. Simplicity invites us to strip away the clutter of materialism and dishonesty, leaving room for genuine relationships and trust in God's provision.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I lie to myself and others - pretending to be somebody that I am not?
- Have I taken or misused anything that doesn't belong to me?
- Am I truthful in my speech or comments, avoiding gossip or deceit?
- Have I indulged in online shopping, acquiring things I don't need that only clutter my life?

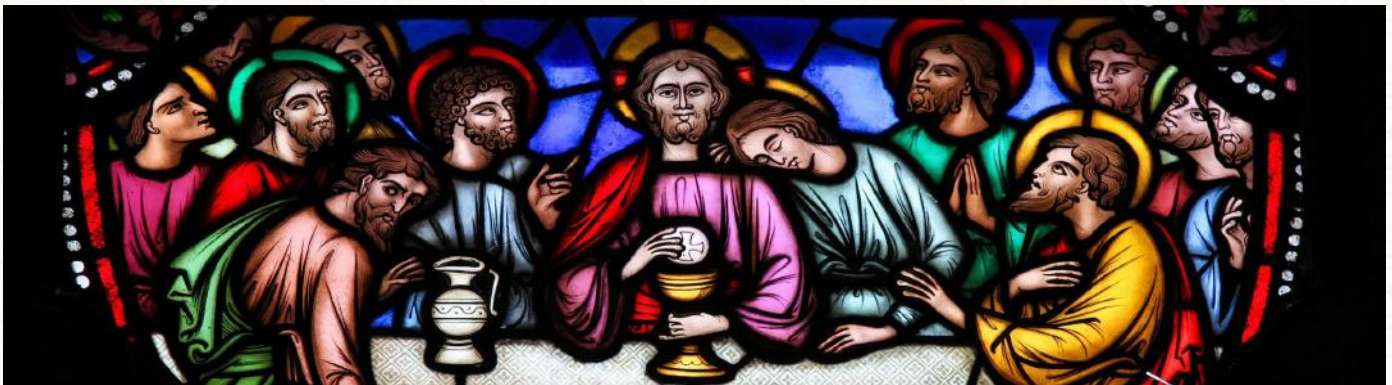


FRIDAY

Zeal

Commandments:

4. Honor your father and mother.



“Zeal is LOVE on fire” to use the phrase often associated with St. Vincent. This ZEAL is an especially important virtue today because we can so easily become what Pope Francis calls, “elegant Catholics.” Where we say our prayers, go to mass, follow the rules—but forget that all of that is secondary to what matters most: BECOMING CHRIST FOR OTHERS! God first, Neighbor second, and then Me. Third.

Zeal is a burning love that moves us to act boldly for God and our neighbors.

"NEVER BE LACKING IN ZEAL, BUT KEEP YOUR SPIRITUAL FERVOR, SERVING THE LORD." (Romans 12:11)

The 4th commandment, honoring father and mother, teaches us to respect those entrusted with authority and care, but zeal takes us further: to pour ourselves out in service, charity, and evangelization. Zeal energizes us to seek justice, to defend the dignity of the poor, to teach the ignorant, and to build up the Body of Christ. It guards against mediocrity, stirring us to live our faith with fervor, generosity, and joyful sacrifice.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I honor and respect my parents, elders, and mentors?
- Have I become an elegant Catholic and not attended to my call of serving others or supporting causes that help the poor?
- Have I let myself fall into spiritual lukewarmness - neglecting to nurture and grow in my faith and relationship with the Lord?
- What is stealing my joy and enthusiasm of life?



CONFESSION MADE EASY

Enter confessional, choose face to face or behind screen.... then begin...

GREETING



YOU



PRIEST

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

As you make the sign of the cross

The priest will then greet you and invite you offer your sins to the Lord.

CONFESSION OF SINS



Bless me, Father for I have sinned. It has been ... weeks /months / years since my last confession...

Approximate, if you don't remember.

I ask God's forgiveness for these sins...

- Then confess your sins, simply and sincerely. No explanation needed. Truly.
- Remember, you are confessing what your sins are, not why you did them.

Priest will usually offer some thoughtful insight and encouragement

He then gives you a penance, a tangible expression of your desire to do better (which is usually to recite a prayer). After which, he will ask if you know an Act of Contrition...

ACT OF CONTRITION



A simple, beautiful Act of Contrition...
"Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

Or you can say an Act of Contrition you may already know.

In Jesus' name, the priest then prays...
I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest then invites you to go in peace, having been forgiven by God!