EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Below is a suggested way of examining your conscience in preparation for a fruitful confession of sin. It focuses on the Ten Commandments and gives examples of the kinds of sins that tend to be committed against each of those divine precepts.

I. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have false gods before me.
   - Have I rejected God's revelation as it comes to me through the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church?
   - Have I served money, power, sexuality or any other lesser good as if it were the supreme good to be sought?
   - Have I despised God's help? Have I presumed upon God's mercy?
   - Have I placed faith in superstition?

II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
   - Have I disrespected the holiness of God and of things or persons specially associated with God?
   - Have I made false oaths or failed to keep vows made in God's sight?

III. You shall keep holy the Sabbath day.
   - Have I failed through my own fault to worship God on Sundays or designated Holy Days of Obligation?
   - Have I kept Sunday holy by using it as a time for recreation and family, as a day of charitable activity and by making extra time for prayer? Have I rested sufficiently to renew me for the tasks of the remainder of the week?
   - Do I pray regularly and attentively throughout the week?

IV. You shall honor your father and your mother.
   - Have I fulfilled obligations towards my parents, especially in their advancing years?
   - Have I been respectfully obedient to those who are legitimate authorities in my life?

V. You shall not kill.
   - Have I contributed to or concurred in any way with the taking of human life through abortion, euthanasia or other threats to human life?
   - Have I done damage to another's reputation or well being in any way?
   - Have I jeopardized my own well being through the use of alcohol, drugs or some other self-destructive behavior?
   - Have I wished for ill fate to befall another?
   - Have I done anything that gives bad example to others and might lead them to fall into sin themselves?

VI and IX. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.
   - Have I engaged in willful sexual intercourse outside of marriage?
   - Within marriage, have I engaged in sexual activity without regard for expressing true love for my spouse or without openness to the possibility of receiving the gift of human life?
   - Have I been sexually impure with another or with myself?
   - Has my marriage been celebrated in the Catholic Church or with the permission of the Catholic Church?
   - Have I pursued and entertained lustful thoughts? Have I been careful about the sexual content of materials I read or view?

VII and X. You shall not steal. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.
   - Have I respected the property of others? Have I taken the goods of another or done willful damage to them?
   - Have I taken the intellectual property of others by taking their ideas without giving credit?
   - Have I deprived others of a just wage? Have I failed to give my employer a day's work for a day's pay?
   - Have I failed to share my resources with those less fortunate than me?
   - Have I been discontent with my own resources from God and envied those of my neighbor?

VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
   - Have I told serious lies? Have I gossiped?
   - Have I disclosed the faults of another without serious reason to do so?