VI. Love and Responsibility

Reflection

Sexual sin is not always the most serious, but it is the one that catches most of us at some time in our lives. Sex and the body are great goods, so they must be protected by extra effort in our flesh-obsessed society.

- Am I faithful to my wife in thought and action?
- Do I regard my wife’s sexuality as a gift, or as something to be used only for my pleasure?
- Have I used contraception or allowed or pressured my wife to use contraception?
- Have I deliberately and consciously entertained sexual thoughts about anyone besides my spouse?
- Have I deliberately viewed pornographic material – in books, magazines or the Internet?
- Have I disclosed secrets given to me by my wife, children, or friends to others without good reason?
- Have I fostered bad relations between members of my family by spreading lies or revealing faults of others? In particular, have I used malicious speech to turn my children against my wife or my wife against my children?

VII. Love is Based on Honesty

Reflection

We all want to be good fathers and men of honor. Be honest with yourself and with others.

- Have I encouraged a spirit of honesty within myself and my family?
- Have I lied or encouraged others to lie?
- Have I revealed secrets given to me by my wife, children, or friends to others without good reason?
- Have I fostered bad relations between members of my family by spreading lies or revealing faults of others? In particular, have I used malicious speech to turn my children against my wife or my wife against my children?
- Have I been sterilized or allowed or pressured my wife to be sterilized?
- Have I encouraged a spirit of giving, especially in my children, teaching them not to look down upon the poor?
- Have I been envious of another’s possessions, abilities, good looks, success, etc.?

Forgiveness

This examination of conscience has only one goal: to help you become the father you are called to be, and to lead you to the extraordinary grace found only in the Sacrament of Confession. No matter how many or how serious your sins, Jesus awaits in the person of the priest with the grace of forgiveness. How sweet the sound when you hear the words: “Your sins are forgiven. Go in the peace of Christ.”
I. God and Neighbor

Reflection

Many people do not go to Confession because they say they have nothing to confess—they haven’t stolen anything or killed anyone. Yet if you reflect seriously on the words of Jesus regarding love of God and neighbor, you may recall a number of ways you have “missed the mark.”

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

- Do I seek to love God with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength? Do I put anything or anyone above God?
- Do I expect my wife or children to replace God in my life? Do I expect them to be perfect or to give me everything I need emotionally and spiritually?
- Do I pray and attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation? Do I keep God in my thoughts so that his will has an effect on my actions?
- Am I a spiritual leader for my family? Am I an aid or an obstacle emotionally and spiritually?
- Do I include my wife in important decisions, treating her as a true partner for life?
- If my wife and I are drifting away from one another, have I taken steps to rectify this? Have I engaged her in conversation about specific difficulties?

II. My Marriage

Reflection

Remember the joy of your wedding day, when you promised before God to love your wife in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, till death do you part. Have you kept the promise?

- Do I treat my wife with love and respect? Have I given myself to her fully, so that her good is my goal, or do I withhold some of the love that is due her?
- Do I listen to my wife’s concerns, desires, and needs with true attention? Do I respond not only with words but with actions?
- Do I respect and encourage my wife, recognizing her as a true partner for life?
- If my wife and I are drifting away from one another, have I taken steps to rectify this? Have I engaged her in conversation about specific difficulties?

III. My Children

Reflection

Children are a great blessing and turn husband and wife into father and mother, a new identity. Yet children can be a great challenge to your patience, discipline, and example say to my children about God?

- Do I allow my children freedom to develop as God made them, or do I treat them like I do myself?
- Do I treat my children as gifts from God or more like a possessions to be molded by me?
- Do I make time for my children, even when tired, and care for them as my own flesh and blood?
- Do I allow my children freedom to develop as God made them, with unique personalities, while forming their consciences according to the guidance of the Church?
- Do I help my children along the road to maturity by providing discipline? Or do I avoid the difficult task of discipline?

IV. Protecting Life

Reflection

Life is God’s great gift. Each person is unique and made by God to serve a purpose in the world. To defend life lies at the heart of manhood.

- Have I deliberately harmed anyone?
- Have I abused drugs or alcohol to the detriment of my life and the life of my family?
- Have I allowed my wife to abuse my children? Have I allowed any of my children to abuse my wife or each other, either physically or in any other way?
- Have I encouraged, pressured, or allowed my wife or daughter to have an abortion?
- Have I attempted suicide or seriously considered it?
- Have I threatened the lives or safety of my wife or children?
- Do I routinely drive in a reckless or unsafe manner?

V. Work and World

Reflection

A man’s identity is tied up in his work, as he provides for himself and his family. Yet work is not an end in itself and must be done with virtue and honor.

- Do I deliberately pick favorites among my children, making some feel rejected?
- Do I physically abuse my children?
- Do I emotionally or mentally abuse my children? Do I ridicule them and point out all their faults and failings in order to discourage them?