

An Examination of My Life

The following list of capital sins, root sins, from our tradition, with the fears that cause them and the symptoms they manifest, may help you examine our lives in a way that is more meaningful. For most of us who do not have death-brining choices to confess, the recognition of some of these root areas of concern will be the best way to admit our sinfulness and help us discover the areas of our lives that need the most attention, and most need the healing touch of God's grace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Because God's call from fear to love is a journey involving the cross and death, we want to choose an easier way to new life. All sin is an attempt to avoid the cost. All sin is substitution for real growth and real joy. Our tradition says the following are some of our most common substitutions.

1. PRIDE

When we:

- * fear that we do not measure up;
- * fear that we are not as good as others;
- * fear the brokenness that is in us and have never learned to forgive it;
- * fear the weakness that is in us;
- * choose false pride and arrogance; we substitute false pride for the quiet love and respect for self.

Symptoms of false pride are:

- * we demand too much of self and others;
- * we give in to the "tyranny of the shoulds" always saying what we or others "should" or "should not" have done;
- * we judge ourselves and others too quickly and too harshly;
- * we have to be first;
- * we have to be center;
- * we believe our way is the only way;
- * we brag or exaggerate too much;
- * we dominate and need to control;

Lord, for sins of pride, we ask forgiveness.

2. GREED/COVETOUSNESS

When we:

- * fear that people will not love us for who we are;
- * fear that we will be judged;
- * fear that we will not be safer;
- * fear that God will not provide; we give it to greed and covetousness, we cover our insecurities in our own eyes and in the supposed feelings of others with material possessions.

Symptoms of greed are:

- * we become too attached to possessions;
- * we allow our possessions to own us, not us them;
- * we work too hard;
- * we keep too fast a pace;
- * we do not keep holy the Lord's Day and do not make room for God in our life;
- * we hoard money;
- * we do not share enough with the poor;
- * we might give in to stealing or dishonesty;
- * we have no time for God or prayer;
- * we have "strange gods before us" as the first commandment warns can happen;
- * we do not have time for parents or family.

Lord, for sins of greed, we ask forgiveness.

3. LUST

When we:

- * fear to trust another;
- * fear to entrust ourselves to another; we substitute lust, we give in to lust.

Symptoms of lust are:

- * we turn people into objects;
- * we use people;
- * we never learn to trust;
- * we focus on pleasure rather than other's needs;
- * we turn to adultery or fornication;
- * we turn to pornography;

Lord, for sins of lust, we ask forgiveness.

4. ANGER

When we:

- * fear being hurt;
 - * fear being controlled;
 - * fear not being liked;
 - * fear being judged;
 - * fear being found out;
 - * fear being taken for granted;
- we turn to anger at self, others and God.

Symptoms of anger are:

- * we are impatient with self;
- * we are impatient with others;
- * we are unforgiving of self and others;
- * we are unable to pray;
- * we lack gentleness;
- * we feel that we have been gyped;
- * we have an impetuous spirit;
- * we curse or use bad language;
- * we use God's name without respect;
- * we are impatient on the highways;
- * we can become cold and cynical.

Lord, for sins of anger, we ask forgiveness.

5. GLUTTONY

When we:

- * fear to face ourselves;
 - * fear to face our problems;
 - * fear dealing with others;
 - * fear being overwhelmed;
- We turn to gluttony/drunkenness.

Symptoms of gluttony are:

- * we eat too much;
- * we eat too often;
- * we eat to solve problems;
- * we turn to drugs;
- * we commit "adultery with the bottle" and abuse alcoholic beverages; we gain strength, courage, and meaning in life via food, drink or drugs rather than in relationships.

6. ENVY/JEALOUSY

When we:

- * fear not looking good;
 - * fear being judged;
 - * fear we are missing out;
 - * fear life is passing us by;
- we turn to envy or jealousy.

Symptoms of envy/jealousy are:

- * we have a suspicious spirit;
- * we criticize too much;
- * we entertain sinful desires;
- * we "covet" neighbors' success;
- * we put others down;
- * we gossip too much;
- * we give in to slander.

Lord, for sins of envy, we ask forgiveness.

7. SLOTH/LAZINESS

When we:

- * fear the cost of trying;
- * fear hard work;
- * fear the cost of relationships;
- * fear failure;
- * fear being hurt; we turn to sloth.

Symptoms of sloth are:

- * we withdraw from life;
- * we set no ideals;
- * we quit before we finish;
- * we set no goals;
- * we never reach out;
- * we do not use talents for God or others.

Lord, for sins of sloth, we ask forgiveness.

ACT OF CONTRITION

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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.