

MEDITATION ON OUR PAST SINS

ON OUR SINFUL PAST

Introduction:

- After the meditation of the Principle and Foundation - namely the aim of our existence and of the of all creation - *to know, to love and to serve God above all things* - Ignatius enjoins the retreatants to meditate on their past sinful lives, so that moved by sorrow and abhorrence of sin, they may renounce their past sinful lives and turn a new page in their dealings with God.
- .St. Ignatius in his book of The Spiritual Exercises - (Nos. 238 to 243) - offers us a simple method of examination of conscience to discover our past sins and failures so that we may repent and ask God for pardon.
- Following that method we shall reflect on how in the past, we kept the will of God – in other words how we kept the **“The Ten Commandments”**
- **To reap the fruits of that method of self-examination, kindly, follow the procedure laid down by Ignatius.**
- This meditation on one’s sins is not supposed to be a minute examination of conscience recalling all our sins- *by name and number* - but a global view of our past life to discover how faithful or unfaithful we have been to God’s love in our life. The purpose of this examination of conscience here is not to prepare ourselves right now, for a general confession, but to move our hearts to sorrow and repentance for our past sinful lives.

“The Ten Commandments”

In WHAT THEY COMMAND and

In WHAT THEY FORBID.

Preparation:

- Quiet down and relax.
- For a while, in silence and recollection, place yourself in the presence of God.
- Ask The Holy Spirit to assist you to discover your sinfulness and to feel deeply sorry for it.

Petition Beg of God our Lord for TWO GRACES:

- **Grace One:** To discover how *in your past life*, you failed to keep His Commandments and be moved to sorrow and repentance for your sins.

- **Grace Two:** To help you *in your future life* to keep the Commandments more faithfully.

Examination

Start by reflecting on the first commandment. (Cfr. Appendix here below)

First: What is God ASKING YOU TO DO through the first commandment?

Its positive aspects

- **Check** on how faithfully you have kept it.
- Then, **thank God** for the times when, aided by his grace, you kept it
- Finally, **ask God to help you** to keep it more faithfully in future.

Second: Examine yourself on WHAT DOES GOD FORBID YOU TO DO by the first commandment?

Its Negative aspects

- **Check** in what way you have failed to keep it.
- After that, **move yourself to sorrow and repentance** for the times you offended God by breaking the first Commandment.
- Then, **ask God to help you** to improve you and give you strength to keep away from occasions of sin.

Next;

- ✓ After you finished examining yourself and praying on the First Commandment, say one 'Our Farther and a Hail Mary'
- ✓ Then, take the second Commandment and follow the same procedure, then the next and next commandment.
- ✓ If you cannot cover the Ten Commandments in one sitting, some time later, as soon as possible, following the same method, carry on mediating on all of them, starting at the point where you stopped previously.
- ✓ End the exercise by saying The Our Father and reciting or singing an appropriate hymn.

APPENDIX

THE TEN COMMANMENTS IN PARTICULAR

1st. COMMANDMENT: I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods before me.

Things Commanded.: Love of God, Faith and Trust. Thanksgiving, Praise, Adoration and Obedience to God.

Things Forbidden: Unbelief, Indifference in your religious practice, Superstition and Idol worship. Giving up your faith. Joining other religious groups. Neglect of prayer.

2nd. COMMANDMENT: *You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain..*

Things Commanded: Praise and reverence of God's name, Keep vows, oaths and promises made to God.

Things Forbidden: Blasphemy, Complaining and talking against God, Cursing, Making fun of sacred things, Misusing the Sacraments and sacred things, False oaths and swearing.

3rd. COMMANDMENT: *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.*

Things Commanded: On Sundays you have to make time for God, for your family, for yourself and for others. Make your Sunday a '**Holy Day**', **not just a 'Holiday'** by attending Mass, Scripture reading, extra time for prayer, works of charity and acts of service to your neighbors.

Things Forbidden: Missing Sunday Mass, On Sundays spending too much time for yourself or in worldly things and entertainments, enjoying sinful and dangerous pleasures.

4th. COMMANDMENT. *Honor your Father and Mother.*

Things Commanded: Love and respect the members of your family especially your parents, children and grandparents. Take care of their needs: material, emotional and spiritual. See to the Christian education of your children. Respect lawful authorities, both Church and Government. Willingly listen to them and humbly accept their correction. . Keep the laws both of the Church and of the state.

Things Forbidden; Neglecting your family members, specially, your Parents in their economical and emotional needs, much more in their old age. Disobedience and Insubordination. Negative criticisms and disrespect to authorities both ecclesiastical and civil. Unlawful breaking of laws, both civil and ecclesiastical.

5th. COMMANDMENT: *You shall not kill.*

Things Commanded: Love others as you love yourself. Respect for Human life at all stages and circumstances from conception to old age. Caring for the well being of others irrespectively of caste, religion, economical status, sex, etc. Be sensitive to the feelings of others, Respect and safeguard their health, their bodies, their reputation and dignity. Take proper care of your health and safety.

Things Forbidden: Murder. Abortion, Mercy killing, Abuses, Striking. Assaulting others physically or verbally. Harming others' health or their feelings and personal integrity. Blackmail. Suicide, Neglect of your health. Harmful habits. Addictions such as abuse of alcohol, drugs, over-eating. Etc.

6th & 9th COMMANDMENTS: *You shall not commit adultery.*

Things Commanded: Proper use of sex, Fidelity to your marriage vows. Mutual love among the spouses. Providing for the sexual, emotional, economical, physical and religious needs of your partner.

Things Forbidden: Pre-marital sex, Extra-marital Sex, Adultery, Immoral methods of birth control, Divorce, Rape, Masturbation, Pornography and Unnatural sex practices like homosexuality, promiscuity, Etc.

7th & 10th COMMANDMENTS: *You shall not Steal.*

Things Commanded: Justice and fairness to one and all. Respect for others' property. Keep contracts and other agreements. Pay just salaries to your employees. Give to each one his due.

Things Forbidden: Stealing, Cheating, Corruption. Giving and taking bribes and "Haptas" Extortion. Misappropriation. Depriving others from their rights and properties, Exploitation of any type. Taking advantage of others' plight and ignorance. Greed for money and properties, etc.

8th. COMMANDMENT: *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*

Things Commanded: Truthfulness in word and action. Let your speech be "Yes, Yes – No, No". Sincerity and honesty in all dealings with others.

Things Forbidden: Lies, Bluffing, Cheating, Carrying Tales, Gossip, Spreading others' sins and mistakes, False witness, False accusations, Exaggerations, Spoiling others' good name, Spreading rumors, Backbiting, Destructive criticisms, Malicious insinuations, Etc.