

An Examination of Conscience

with special attention to the influence of digital technology

(Based on *A Mind at Peace: Reclaiming an Ordered Soul in the Age of Distraction*)

1. In what areas of my life am I prone to compulsive behavior, tempted to ignore my agency, or inclined to shirk responsibility for my actions? Is there a pattern of my behavior that I would be better off without?
2. Am I opening myself to temptations against temperance through insufficient vigilance in media consumption?
3. Is there sufficient order in my daily life—my waking, sleeping, eating, exercise, and fruitful use of time—so that I am ready to labor cheerfully and effectively in the service of others?
4. Do I find myself wishing more for the things that money can buy—and that are relentlessly advertised in the media—than for friendship, a clear conscience, and the ability to know and do God’s will?
5. Do I give due attention to the people in my life, making extra effort for the people who most need my attention?
6. Do I rely on easy modes of sharing information when it would be better to have a real conversation, either by live voice or face-to-face?
7. Have I allowed an artistic or athletic excellence from my childhood needlessly to slip away? Would I find a healthy and innocent joy in regaining it?
8. Am I entangled by the pleasures of the ear? Do I find it difficult to work or to relax without music playing?
9. Do I make a point of listening well to others? Would my friends and co-workers describe me as a good listener?
10. Do I have a habit of compulsive looking: at social media, at my inbox, at screens in general?
11. Is my daily looking at screens making me anxious, giving me headaches, or causing me to have difficulty sleeping?
12. Do I have a positive habit of looking at beautiful and intelligible things not on screens that helps to make me calm, encourages reflection, and enables me to learn about the things I see?

13. Have I allowed myself to settle for a constant diet of pre-packaged sensory stimuli, especially in the form of television and movies, instead of putting my imagination to work by reading a good book?
14. Am I allowing myself to be discouraged when I am interiorly attacked by bad images? Am I resolute in dismissing them and turning my mind back to what is real, true, and good?
15. Am I fascinated or preoccupied with fantasy or virtual reality, or even styles and fads, to the exclusion of taking an interest in permanent and real things?
16. Have I sufficiently tended my memory, or have I allowed it to become an unweeded garden?
17. What skills, practices, subjects of study, or persons have I neglected to attend to in recent years? What concrete steps can I take to ameliorate those patterns of behavior?
18. In my speech, do I strive for precise and careful phrasing, to communicate clearly the concepts I intend and the truths I mean to assert?
19. When I see a movie or read a novel, do I go beyond appreciating whether the story is compelling, and ask whether or to what degree it is true?
20. Have I been complacent or vigilant in the pursuit and cultivation of truth?
21. Am I consistent in seeking counsel from friends and trusted advisors who can help me order my actions to their ultimate end and my highest good: the love of God and neighbor?
22. Do I pray for God's grace before I make important decisions and begin important tasks, confident that God's sole desire is my eternal happiness and the well-being and eternal salvation of those I serve?
23. Do I often enough recognize that there are those who depend upon me for wise counsel and example?
24. Do I acknowledge with humble realism that I am a sinner, even in small ways and in my less-than-saintly uses of everyday technology?
25. Have I set reasonable and sustainable limits to the use of smartphones and other digital media, limits set in light of charity's demands upon me, understood as accurately and honestly as I possibly can?