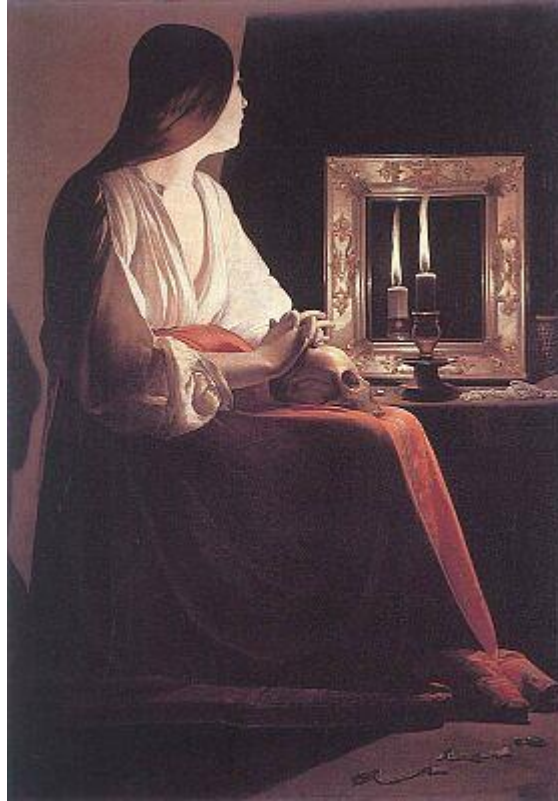


Examination of Conscience



Lamentations 3:40 "Let us search our ways, and seek, and return to the Lord."

1 Corinthians 11:28-31 "But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you: and many sleep. But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Self-examination is and always has been a part of being a part of Israel. Specific disciplines arose very early in monastic life, becoming a part of the regular daily exercises of the monks and nuns. St. Ignatius Loyola perfected the techniques in the 16th c., writing of them in his "Spiritual Exercises."

Outline of St. Ignatius's steps for a General Examination of Conscience:

- The first Point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits received.
- The second, to ask grace to know our sins and cast them out.
- The third, to ask account of our soul from the hour that we rose up to the present Examen, hour by hour, or period by period: and first as to thoughts, and then as to words, and then as to acts.
- The fourth, to ask pardon of God our Lord for the faults.
- The fifth, to purpose amendment with His grace.

It is traditional to end the nightly examination of conscience with the Our Father.

If the sins we've uncovered involve grave matter -- especially if they were done with full consent and knowledge -- we receive the Sacrament of Penance as soon as possible and do not receive the Eucharist until we have done so.