

## **Love Of Neighbor (Positive obligations)**

The love of one's neighbor is essentially bound up with the love of God. St. John put the matter simply when he said: "If any man say that he loves God and hateth his neighbor, that man is a liar and the truth is not in him." This stands to reason when one considers that God, whom we are bound to love first and foremost and with all our hearts and souls, loves every human being whom He created and desires his salvation. Hence it would be a contradiction to profess love of God and at the same time to exclude a neighbor from our love. The object of all love is the good of the one loved.

The object of love of God is the honor and glory of God; the object of love of neighbor is the welfare of our fellowmen, both spiritual and temporal, and through that the honor and glory of God. Therefore the love of neighbor imposes many positive duties upon us, such as almsgiving, correction, forgiveness, etc., each one of which is directed towards the wellbeing and happiness of our neighbor; at the same time it forbids certain sins which would bring unhappiness, spiritual or temporal, to a neighbor. In the following examen the positive duties will be enumerated; in the next chapter, the questions will be based on the sins that must be avoided by one who wishes to practice true love of neighbor.

## **I. Mortal Sins**

1. Have I, over a long period, refused to give any alms for the relief of the needy, even though I had many opportunities and sufficient means without depriving my family or myself of the necessities of life?
2. Have I, on un-Christian principles, refused to give any aid to missionaries working for the salvation of abandoned souls, though I could have given without great sacrifice?
3. As a doctor or a nurse, have I refused to give my needed services to someone in extreme danger of death because I knew there was no hope of being paid?
4. Have I demanded gravely exorbitant and unreasonable fees from those who needed my services?
5. Have I deliberately permitted a person to die without a priest and without religious ministrations?
6. Have I, out of human respect or fear of what others might think, failed to assist the dying spiritually when I knew they needed my help?
7. Have I squandered or given away money outside my home to the extent that it left my immediate family in want of necessary things?
8. Have I refused to remind someone of the danger of his state when I knew that that person had committed a mortal sin and that my warning alone would probably awaken repentance?
9. Have I refused to warn someone subject to my influence when I knew that person was about to commit a mortal sin and that I could easily and probably prevent it?

10. As a husband or wife have I made no effort to prevent mortal sins of my partner?

11. As a superior or one in authority have I neglected my duty of preventing those in my charge from committing mortal sin, or correcting them after they had fallen?

12. Have I failed to report to someone in authority the certain sins of a neighbor, which I knew were doing harm to innocent persons or to the community as a whole?

13. Have I done nothing to prevent the circulation of obscene books and magazines when I had the opportunity?

14. As a public official, have I permitted evil persons, such as abortionists, dope-peddlers, and obscene book-dealers to continue their illegal and immoral practices?

15. Have I permitted another to suffer grave injustice or mistreatment when my authority or influence could have prevented it?

16. Have I refused in my heart to forgive a person who has injured me?

17. Have I over a considerable period of time refused to talk to or acknowledge someone who has wronged me?

18. When I myself was guilty of doing evil against my neighbor, have I refused in word or in deed to show that I was sorry and wished to be forgiven?

19. When mutual offense was given between myself and another, have I refused to make any advances toward reconciliation unless the other person made them first?

20. Have I, by silence or approval, failed to prevent the serious defamation of another's character when I could have done so?

## II. Venial Sins

1. Have I been miserly and grudging in giving alms for the relief of the poor?
2. Have I been careless and negligent in my care of the sick who were dependent on me?
3. Have I failed to consider the poverty of others in charging them for my services?
4. Have I complained about being asked frequently to give alms for the salvation of abandoned souls at home or abroad?
5. Have I, as a well-to-do person, given far less than I could easily have contributed for the relief of the needy?
6. Have I measured my charity only by what others gave, or by what I might receive in return, instead of my ability to give to the need of others?
7. Have I demanded publicity and praise for every alms I gave?
8. Have I been ashamed or afraid to rebuke others for evil, even though I was not bound under pain of mortal sin to do so?
9. Have I, as a parent or guardian, negligently permitted those under my care to go uncorrected in their venial faults?
10. Have I nursed resentment against others, even though I did make an effort at forgiveness?
11. Have I allowed my sensitiveness to lead to hurt feelings and coolness towards others?

12. Have I failed to try to make others happy and comfortable, giving in to morose, gloomy, selfish moods?

13. Have I rejected ready-made opportunities to comfort someone in sorrow, or to encourage someone in danger of despair?

14. Have I gone out of my way to evade an opportunity to enlighten someone on religious truth?

15. Have I permitted gossip and petty tale-bearing to go on in my presence without an effort to change the subject?