EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE—PRIDE

~Excerpt from *Bathe Seven Times (A Contemplative Look at the Seven Capital Sins)*
by M. Nadine Brown

In My Daily Life

Where do I think too highly of myself?
Where do I willingly choose and claim as my own what belongs to God?
Where do I have an excessive love of self in my thoughts? in my words? in my actions?
- **How is this reflected in the way I dress? the car I drive? my house? my possessions?**
- **How is this excessive love of self reflected in the way I spend my money, time, and talent?**

In what ways do I still serve two masters?
Where is my sin of pride acting as the gateway to other sins, especially spiritual sloth, envy, and anger?

Pride of Intellect

In what ways am I attached to my own judgment and thoughts, with the emphasis on the natural knowledge that I have attained myself?
Am I unwilling to listen to another's position and discernment?
- **Do I often find myself thinking "I already know that" when someone is giving me counsel or advice?**
- **In what situations am I unwilling to be open and learn, especially from God?**

Where is my pride killing my faith?
- **Where am I so "full" of my own knowledge that I am not open to having my soul filled with God's light in prayer?**

Where is my intellect an obstacle to contemplation and union with God?
Where do I have a tendency to presume too greatly on my own abilities and gifts?
Do I feel that I am so far advanced spiritually that I do not need a spiritual director to guide and direct me?
Am I a perfectionist?

Pride of Authority / Superiority

Where is my excessive self-love leading me to be domineering, overbearing, arrogant, critical, argumentative, bossy, and offensive?
What is my attitude toward those in authority over me?
- **Do I willingly welcome their advice, encouragement, and correction, or am I rigid and unbending? Do I think, "It's my way or I'm not doing it"?**
- **Do I treat those in authority in a reverent way?**

Do I have difficulty accepting God and His Church as my authority?
- **Where are my actions saying "My will be done" rather than "Thy will be done"?**
- **Do I desire God's counsel? Do I willingly obey whatever He tells me?**

In what situations do I want to control the lives of others?
Where does my sin of pride readily lead me into angry feelings, thoughts, words, and actions?
Do I have a tendency to think that I am better than others?
- **Where am I apathetic of the rights and feeling of others?**

Pride of Ambition

Do I crave praise, recognition, and places of honor?

- **Does my ambition to be #1 cause me to dominate those "beneath me"?**
- **Am I overly competitive, seeking places of honor that others hold?**

Do I impose my own ideas and ways of doing things on others?

- **Where am I bossy, demanding my own way?**
- **Where do I exert my influence in order to get my own way?**

What am I doing to correct my overbearing, critical attitude?

In what situations do I have a tendency to think that I am better than others are?

Pride of Timidity

Do I have a timid disposition?

- **If so, has my timidity become a habit and been carried to the extreme that I avoid doing what I should do or do what I should not do?**
- **Has my timidity become a strong habit leading to a lack of self-confidence, fear of ridicule, and little courage and strength to keep resolutions?**
- **Has my habit of timidity caused me to lose hope because I believe my weaknesses are too strong?**
- **Where do I use my timidity to hide my weaknesses and imperfections for fear of ridicule?**

How do I view my weaknesses?

- **Do I over-exaggerate my weaknesses?**
- **Do I avoid doing things because I might not be the best?**
- **Do I use my weaknesses as an excuse because of fear of failure?**

In what situations does my fear of failure limit God's ability to use me?

Where am I allowing my fear of ridicule hold me back on my spiritual journey?

Pride of Sensitiveness

Do my feelings get wounded and hurt easily?

- **In which situations do I most easily feel offended?**
- **Which persons do I most readily take offense from?**
- **Do I feel unloved and unwanted, thinking that others are purposely trying to hurt me?**
- **Am I easily wounded with every lack of recognition or supposed neglect?**

Am I a forgiving person?

- **Do I forgive others right away, or do I hold and nurse a grudge, preventing reconciliation?**
- **Do I receive a false joy out of feeling badly over these perceived hurts?**
- **Do I speak coldly to or refuse to speak to those who have hurt me?**
- **In what situations have I made it a habit to cling to previous hurts?**
- **Do I experience self-satisfaction and self-righteousness in not being on speaking terms with another?**

Can I laugh at my mistakes? Can I laugh with others about my mistakes?

- **Do I resent corrections, advice, help, or favors?**

Does my pride of sensitivity prevent unity in my family and community?

Does my pride of sensitivity force others to have to "walk on eggshells" so as to not hurt my feelings?

Pride of Complacency (Vanity)

Is the opinion and esteem of others more important to me than God's opinion and esteem of me?

- **Does my craving to be well thought of lead me to think, speak, or act in a vain way?**
- **Do I work hard to uphold my reputation even if that reputation may not be totally truthful?**

Where does my vanity displace my focus from living my life to bring honor and glory to God, to pleasing others?

- **Do I misuse my God-given talents hoping to receive the praise and esteem of others?**

Am I vain about my personal looks, strength, talents, athletic ability, or possessions?

- **Does my sin of vanity cause me to become like the Pharisees, thinking too highly of myself, while looking down on others?**
- **Has my vanity caused me to become boastful, hypocritical, stubborn, disobedient, and critical?**
- **Do I have an overbearing, haughty, "holier than thou" attitude?**
- **Do I carry myself in a conceited, vain way?**
- **What can I do to be more welcoming in my countenance?**

Do I use my gifts or perform any spiritual works, devotions, or outward pious actions in order to be noticed by my spiritual director or others?

- **Do I minimize or hide my faults with my spiritual director?**

Do I tend to withhold information from my spiritual director?
Do I seek the esteem and praise of others for my spiritual works?
Is the real motivation behind my spiritual works, devotions, and pious actions to make me feel good?

In My Spiritual Life

As I progress spiritually, has a secret pride developed within me, leading to complacency with myself and my spiritual accomplishments?

- **Have I begun to almost condemn others in my thoughts or actions who don't have similar devotions and spirituality?**

Do I find myself witnessing more to myself than to God?
Where do I have trouble being obedient to God's word to me?
Where does my pride cause me to take my focus off God and put it on myself?
In my spiritual journey, where do I take the credit rather than giving God the glory?

- **Do I desire a higher degree of prayer without going through the necessary stages like everyone else?**
- **How does my excessive love of self prevent me from entering into the purification process more fully?**

Do I have a problem with spiritual pride?

- **Do I flee from and harbor hostility against those who correct me on my spiritual journey?**
- **When do I prefer to instruct rather than to be instructed (when I should be learning)?**
- **Where does spiritual pride in my life turn me away from the contemplation of divine things?**
- **Where is my pride blinding my understanding and leading me into spiritual self-delusion?**
- **Do my occasions of false piety cause another to turn away from wanting to be holy?**