

# A GUIDE TO CONFESSION

(take this with you ... it's really okay)



## BEFORE YOU GO

Examine your conscience, that is, reflect on what sins you've committed. To guide you, just Google "examination of conscience" and you'll find resources to help you. It's even all right to make a list to bring with you if that helps.



## INTRODUCTION

When you come before the priest, begin by making the Sign of the Cross (praying the words out loud), and continue by saying, "Bless me, Father, I have sinned. It has been (how long) since my last confession. These are my sins..."



## CONFESSION

List the sins you've committed that came to mind during your examination of conscience. Don't be too general ("I haven't been a good person"), but a lot of detail isn't necessary (you don't need to tell the whole story of how a sin came about). If you're not sure if something is a sin, ask the priest. This isn't counseling, so unless you ask, the priest likely won't give you advice. He'll just move on to ...



## PENANCE

The priest will suggest something for you to do or pray as a response to God's mercy. You'll have to remember what this is and do it after the confession is over, so pay attention.



## ACT OF CONTRITION

The priest will then ask you to pray out loud your "Act of Contrition," to demonstrate your sorrow for your sins: "My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy."



## ABSOLUTION

Don't get up to leave after that prayer, because the best part is yet to come: The priest will extend his hands in your direction and he will pray the Prayer of Absolution: "God, the Father of Mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church, may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." You respond: "Amen."



## CONCLUSION

The priest will then likely say something like, "God has freed you from your sin. Go in Peace." To which you can respond: "Thanks be to God." Don't forget to do your penance. If it is saying certain prayers, it's best to do it right away in the church before you forget.

## **An Examination of Conscience for Children**

**Examination of Conscience:** In order to confess their sins children should be taught to how to carefully examine their lives to see what they might have done that they should not have done as well as what they did not do that they should have done. The following questions are meant to assist a child in examining their conscience.

- ⇒ Do I pray each day?
- ⇒ Do I go to Mass each weekend and Holy Day?
- ⇒ Do I misuse the name of God? Do I use his name in anger? Do I swear using his name?
- ⇒ Am I thankful to God for what he has blessed me with?
- ⇒ Do I fail to recognize the gifts and talents God has given me?
- ⇒ Am I grateful for what others do for me? Do I say thank you?
- ⇒ Do I respect my parents, grandparents, teachers and other adults?
- ⇒ Do I say I am sorry when I hurt someone or do something wrong?
- ⇒ Am I fair with my friends? Have I hurt anyone by hitting them or by my words?
- ⇒ Do I share what I have?
- ⇒ How well do I treat my brother(s) and sister(s)?
- ⇒ Do I give good example to those younger than me?
- ⇒ Do I spread lies, rumors, or gossip about others?
- ⇒ Do I mistreat, bully, harass, make fun of other students?
- ⇒ Have I lied?
- ⇒ Have I cheated or otherwise been dishonest in my schoolwork?
- ⇒ Have I stolen anything? Did I return it?
- ⇒ Am I selfish or greedy?
- ⇒ Am I lazy in doing my chores?
- ⇒ Do I hold onto grudges and do not forgive others?
- ⇒ Do I neglect others by spending too much time on the computer or playing games?
- ⇒ Do I watch or look at things I should not on TV or the internet?
- ⇒ Am I envious of what others have?
- ⇒ Do I use bad language or curse?

### **Act of Contrition**

O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.