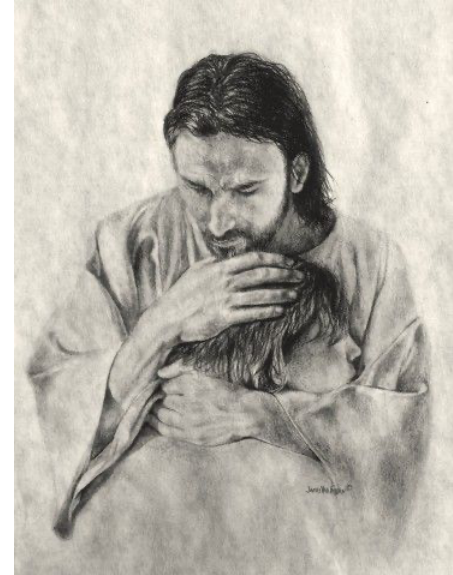


GUIDE TO CONFESSION: AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Steps for making a good Confession

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to know your sins
2. Examine your conscience (below)
3. Express in prayer your sorrow for having committed these sins, or pray for the help to be truly sorry
4. Resolve not to commit these sins again, and to avoid the situations that lead to sin.
5. Confess your sins to the priest.
6. Pray and perform the penance the priest gives you as soon as possible.



Prayers Before Confession

Come Holy Spirit into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess, and grant me your grace to confess them fully, humbly and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again.

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, mirror of innocence and sanctity, and refuge of penitent sinners, intercede for me through the Passion of Your Son, that I may obtain the grace to make good confession. All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a most miserable sinner, that I may repent from my evil ways, that my heart may henceforth be forever united with yours in eternal love.

GOING TO CONFESSION

- Begin by making the sign of the cross and saying: "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (how long?) since my last confession."

The priest may give you a blessing at this time. If he has already done so, continue by confessing your sins, the kinds of sin and the number of times you committed them, to the best of your ability to remember: You may start by: "These are my sins..."

- You may conclude by saying: "For these and all my sins, I am sorry."

If you do not know how to confess, feel uneasy, or if you don't remember your sins, ask the priest to help you

- The priest may offer some advice and will assign you your penance. He may then ask you to pray an Act of Contrition :

Act of Contrition prayer

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen

•The priest will then grant you 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 give 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.”

Respond : “Amen.”

• After Confession, pray or perform your penance as soon as possible. It is a good practice to include an extra prayer for your priest-confessor.

Before Confession:

DO AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The Ten Commandments:

First Commandment: I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.

- Have I denied the existence of God?
- Does someone or something other than God influence my choices?
- Have I doubted or denied my faith?
- Have I rejected the Christian faith, associating myself formally with another religion?
- Have I received communion at a non-Catholic service?
- Have I engaged in superstitious or occult practices?

Second Commandment: You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have I used the name of God in cursing or blasphemy?
- Have I failed to keep the vows or promises that I have made to God?
- Have I spoken about the Church, the saints, or sacred thing with irreverence, hatred, or defiance?
- Have I watched television or movies, or listened to music that treated God, the Church, the saints, or sacred things irreverently?
- Have I been disrespectful in my behavior in Church?

Third Commandment: Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.

- Have I set time aside each day for personal prayer to God, especially on Sunday?
- Have I missed Mass on Sunday or other Holy Days of Obligation?
- Did I habitually come late to and/or leave early from Mass without a good reason?

- Have I fasted an hour before receiving Communion?
- Have I received Communion in a state of mortal sin?
- Did I do unnecessary shopping and business on Sunday and the other Holy Days of Obligation?
- Do I do penance every Friday, if not abstaining from meat, then some other form of penance?
- If I am 14 years of age or older, did I abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent?
- If I am between the ages of 18 and 59, did I fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT: Honor your father and mother.

- If still under the care of my parents, did I obey all that they reasonably asked of me?
- Have I neglected the needs of my parents in their old age or in their time of need?
- Do I live in humble obedience to those who legitimately exercise authority over me?
- Have I provided for the religious education and formation of my children for as long as they are under my care?
- Have I broken the law?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not kill.

- Have I intentionally killed a human being?
- Have I procured, performed, cooperated, or advised another in the intentional killing of an unborn child through abortion?
- Have I seriously considered or attempted suicide?
- Have I unjustly inflicted bodily harm on another person?
- Have I afflicted another person with verbal or emotional abuse?
- Have I failed to forgive anyone?
- Have I harbored hatred, anger, or resentment?
- Am I prejudiced or have I unjustly discriminated against others because of their race, color, nationality, gender or religion?
- By my actions, did I recklessly endanger my life or health, or that of another person?
- Have I gotten drunk or abused drugs?
- Do I endanger my health by not eating right or exercising?
- Have I encouraged others to sin by giving scandal?

SIXTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not commit adultery.

NINTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife

- Have I committed adultery, having sexual relation with someone who is married, or with someone other than my spouse?
- Have I committed fornication, having sexual relations with someone of the opposite sex when neither of us is married?
- Have I committed sodomy, having sexual relations with someone of my own sex?
- Have I raped or sexually molested someone?
- Have I committed masturbation (impurity with self), using

my sexual organs for my own sexual pleasure?

- Have I engaged in sexual foreplay reserved for marriage?
- Have I used artificial means of birth control?
- Have I undergone an operation to render myself sterile for contraceptive purposes?
- Have I willfully entertained impure thoughts?
- Have I purchased or made use of pornography in any form?
- Have I watched movies and television that involve sex and nudity?
- Have I listened to music or jokes that are harmful to purity?
- Have I set out to seduce someone, or allowed myself to be seduced?
- Have I made uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances toward another?
- Have I purposely dressed immodestly?
- Am I living in a valid and licit marriage according to the laws of the Catholic Church?
- Have I given scandal by living with a member of the opposite sex without the benefit of marriage?

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not steal.

TENTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Did I take something that doesn't belong to me?
- Did I deface, destroy, or lose another's property without making restitution?
- Did I cheat on a test, on my taxes, or in business?
- Do I pay employees a living wage, or fail to give a full day's work for a full day's pay?
- Did I take advantage of another's hardship or ignorance by charging more for a product than it is worth?
- Have I squandered money in compulsive gambling?
- Am I envious of others on account of their possessions and talents?
- Have I misused natural resources?
- Do I contribute my time, talents, and money to support the poor, my parish, and the work of the Church?

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I deceived another by lying?
- Did I perjure myself under oath?
- Am I guilty of passing gossip?
- Am I guilty of detraction, destroying a person's reputation by telling others about his faults ?
- Am I guilty of slander or calumny, telling lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation?
- Am I guilty of libel, writing lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation?
- Am I guilty of rash judgment, assuming the worst of another person based on circumstantial evidence?
- Have I failed to make reparation for a lie I told, or for harm done to a person's reputation?
- Did I betray another's confidence through speech