

How to Go to Confession

"To those who have been far away from the sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love, I make this appeal: Come back to this source of grace; do not be afraid! Christ himself is waiting for you. He will heal you; and you will be at peace with God!"
- John Paul II

What makes a good Confession is having the intention of returning to God like the Prodigal son and of acknowledging our sins with true sorrow before his representative, the priest.

STEPS FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

1. Examine your conscience - what sins have you committed since your last good confession.
2. Confess your sins to the priest, expressing a sincere sorrow for your sins.
3. After your confession, perform the penance the priest gives to you.
4. Pray daily for the strength to avoid the occasion of sin, especially for those sins you were just absolved from.

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

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..."*

The priest will give you a penance and then ask you to say an Act of Contrition, to be said from the heart (see prayer below). Finally, the priest will say the prayer of absolution. You are then free to leave forgiven by God of all your sins!

ACT OF CONTRITION

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.

**You are welcome to bring this sheet with you.*

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Examine your conscience. Recall your sins. Calmly ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's Commandments.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: "I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me."

Have I performed my duties toward God reluctantly or grudgingly?

Did I neglect my prayer life?

Have I made "false idols" that have become more important in my life than God? (money, pleasure, success, etc.)

Did I violate the one-hour Eucharistic fast?

Did I fail to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?

Did I seriously believe in something superstitious or engage in a superstitious practice (palm-reading for instance)?

Did I deny a matter of Faith?

Did I endanger my faith by joining or attending meetings of organizations opposed to the Catholic faith?

Have I committed the sin of sacrilege (profanation of sacred person, place or thing)?

SECOND COMMANDMENT: "You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain."

Did I fail to try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions that I made to God?

Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I make use of God's name in a joking or other irreverent manner?

Did I break (private or public) vows?

THIRD COMMANDMENT: "Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath Day."

Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation?

Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass, by not paying attention? Did I cause others to be distracted?

Have I performed any work or business activity that would inhibit the worship due to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, or the appropriate relaxation of mind and body, on a Sunday?

Did I fail to help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?

Did I fail to fast or abstain on a day prescribed by the Church?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT: "Honor your father and your mother." (Ex 20:12)

Have I neglected to teach my children their prayers, send them to church, or give them a Christian education?

Have I been a bad example?

Have I neglected to watch over my children, allowing them to take part in negative influences involving media, electronics, peers, etc.?

Have I honor my parents with my time, attention, and gratitude?

Have I helped serve the needs of my parents as they grow older?

Have I forgiven my family members and sought to reconcile any relationships that may be fractured?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: "You shall not kill."

Did I lose my temper and did it cause harm to anyone?

Was I envious or jealous of others?

Did I injure or take the life of anyone? Was I ever reckless in driving?

Have I condoned unjust violence or offensive behavior? Did I try to repair the scandal done?

How many persons did I lead to sin? What sin or sins were involved?

Did I neglect my health? Did I attempt to take my life?

Have I physically abuse another or myself?

Did I get drunk or use prohibited drugs?

Did I eat or drink more than a sufficient amount, allowing myself to get carried away by gluttony?

Did I consent to, advise, or actively take part in an abortion?

Did I cause harm to anyone with my words or actions?

Did I desire revenge or harbor enmity, hatred, or ill feelings when someone offended me?

Did I ask pardon whenever I offended anyone?

Did I insult or offensively tease others?

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS: "You shall not commit adultery." "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."

Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts?

Did I engage in impure conversations?

Did I consent to being involved in a situation, which I knew could lead me to sin and tempt me with impurity? (Indulging in certain movies, TV shows, books, engaging in inappropriate relationships, etc).

Did I willfully look at pornography, an indecent picture, or look impurely upon another?

Did I lead others to sins of impurity?

Did I commit an impure act by myself or with someone else?

Did I commit adultery or covet someone who is not my spouse?

Did I take or support artificial birth control before or after new life had already been conceived?

Did I honor the martial act by respecting its nature to communicate love and bring forth new life?

Have I treated others, including my spouse in a pure and loving way?

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS: "You shall not steal." "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods."

Did I steal? How much money?

Have I done or caused damage to another person's property? To what extent?

Did I harm anyone by deception, fraud, or coercion in business contracts or transactions?

Did I unnecessarily spend beyond my means?

Do I give to the poor and to the church according to my capacity?

Was I envious of my neighbor's goods?

Did I neglect to pay my debts?

Did I knowingly accept stolen goods?

Did I desire to steal?

Did I give in to laziness or love of comfort rather than diligently work or study?

Was I greedy?

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

Did I tell lies? Did I repair any damage that may have resulted as a consequence of this?

Have I unjustly or rashly accused others?

Did I sin by detraction, that is, by telling the faults of another person without necessity?

Did I sin by calumny, that is, by telling derogatory lies about another person?

Did I engage in gossip?

Based on the *Handbook of Prayers*. Rev. James Socias.