

Things to remember

- Develop the habit of examining your conscience every day. It is then easier to recall sins committed.
- If it is a long time since your last confession, or you are making a general confession, ask the priest to help you.
- Don't put off going to confession. That never solves anything.
- Try to go to confession frequently, at least once a month, to offer God your love in spite of failure and receive both His forgiveness and His strength to overcome your faults and future temptations.
- Sin is any wilful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God.
- We are bound to confess to a priest each and every serious sin (commonly called 'mortal') of which we are aware, in order to receive forgiveness. This is the firm teaching of the Church, founded on the law of a good and loving God.
- Conditions for mortal sin:
 - (1) The offence must be serious.
 - (2) We must know and we must realise that we are committing a mortal sin.
 - (3) We must have full consent of the will.

'It was God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. The appeal we make in Christ's name is: Be reconciled to God.' (2 Corinthians 5: 18-20)

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

A Practical Guide for the Sacrament of Penance



- ❖ Examine your conscience
- ❖ Be sincerely sorry for your sins
- ❖ Confess your sins
- ❖ Resolve to amend your life
- ❖ After your confession, do the penance the priest assigns

A Prayer Before Confession

O my God, help me to see and know the condition of my soul honestly and humbly, and to make a sincere and truthful confession. Teach me true sorrow for my sins. Then, in Your mercy, grant me Your forgiveness, Your grace, and Your love, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ my Redeemer. *Amen.*

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart’

- ❖ Have I ignored God or excluded Him from my life?
- ❖ Have I been loyal to the teachings of the Church and been willing to stand up for my faith in public?
- ❖ Do I remember to pray every day?
- ❖ Is my daily prayer a real conversation with God in mind and heart?
- ❖ Do I have true reverence and love for the name of God or have I offended Him through blasphemy, cursing, or perjury?
- ❖ Have I put my trust in superstitions or involved myself in the occult?
- ❖ Have I missed Holy Mass on any Sunday or Holyday of Obligation through my own fault? Did I fulfil my Easter duties?
- ❖ Have I made a deliberately dishonest Confession in the past?

‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’

- ❖ Have I been disobedient, rude, or disloyal to my parents?
- ❖ Have I been harsh or overbearing in my dealings with others?
- ❖ Have I provided a religious education for my children and encouraged them to know and love their faith?
- ❖ Have I been impatient, angry, proud, jealous, or hateful to others?
- ❖ Have I been drunk, used drugs, given bad example, or spread scandal?
- ❖ Have I been involved in vandalism, driven recklessly, or injured anyone?
- ❖ Have I in any way co-operated in an abortion?
- ❖ Have I been lazy at my work, in study, or in the home?
- ❖ Have I been immodest or impure, either by myself or with others?
- ❖ Have I placed myself in occasions of sin, either by reading, listening to, or looking at what is indecent or pornographic?
- ❖ Have I failed to show love, understanding, and respect to my marriage partner, or been careless about my marriage vows?
- ❖ Have I used forms of birth control forbidden by the Church?
- ❖ Have I been guilty of cheating, theft, or gambling rashly? Have I received stolen goods? Have I made restitution?
- ❖ Have I told lies to injure anyone or to excuse myself?
- ❖ Have I given way to self-pity, brooded over injuries, or refused to forgive?

PROCEDURE IN THE CONFESSIONAL

Begin by saying:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It is (state length of time) since my last confession, and these are my sins..

Now confess your sins. Take your time; don’t be hasty, superficial, or over-anxious. When you have finished, you should say:

I am sorry for all these sins and the sins of my past life.

Then wait while the priest gives any necessary advice, and assigns the penance. Once he has done this, you should express your sorrow by reciting aloud the

Act of Contrition:

O my God, because You are so very good, I am heartily sorry that I have sinned against You, and by the help of Your saving grace, I will endeavour not to sin again.

The priest will then say the words of **Sacramental 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. Amen.

The priest may add:

May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness, and reward you with eternal life. Go in peace and give thanks to God.