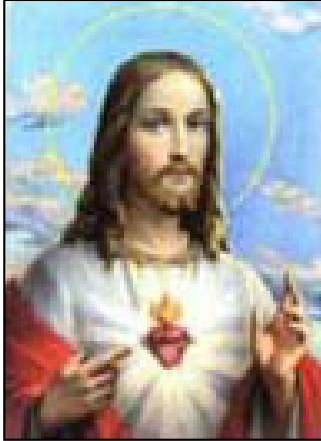


How to go to Confession

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 not have other gods besides me” (Deuteronomy 5:7)

Have I ignored God or excluded Him from my life?

Have I been too lazy to learn more about my Faith?

Have I been loyal to the Scripture, Teachings and Tradition of the Church and been willing to make sacrifices and stand up for my Faith in public?

Do I remember to converse with God every day through prayer?

Is my prayer mere words, or my wants only, or is it a loving conversation?

Have I put my trust in superstitions, newspaper or magazine horoscopes, consulting clairvoyants or mediums, using Ouija boards or the Occult?

Have I shown disrespect for holy things, places or people?

Have I undertaken a penance each Friday as all Catholics are obliged to do?

Did I fulfil my Easter Duties?

Have I made a deliberately dishonest Confession in the past?

“You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain” (Deuteronomy 5:11)

Do I have true reverence and love for the name of God or have I offended Him through blasphemy, cursing or perjury?

“Take care to keep holy the Sabbath day as the Lord, your God, commanded you” (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

Have I missed Mass on any Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?

Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?

Have I received Holy Communion without proper reverence, care or thanksgiving?

Have I worked unnecessarily and neglected to enjoy needed leisure time and rest?

Have I failed to contribute to the support of the Church in proportion to my means?

“Honour your father and mother” (Deuteronomy 5:16)

Have I been angry, disobedient, impatient, rude or disloyal to my parent(s)?

Have I been harsh and overbearing with my children?

Have I provided a religious upbringing for my children and encouraged them to know and love their faith, to pray, to bring them to Sunday Mass?

Have I failed to exercise vigilance over what my children read, see on the TV or internet, or the people they associate with to their detriment?

“You shall not kill” (Deuteronomy 5:17)

Have I been involved in injuring or killing anyone?

Have I attempted suicide, or helped someone else to?

Have I had an abortion or helped anyone else to have one?

Have I abused or misused (prescription) drugs, tobacco or alcohol?

Have I lost my temper without justification?

Have I hurt others by my impatience or my words?
Have I a grudge against anyone, or hated them, or wished evil upon them?
Have I driven aggressively or carelessly, endangering or frightening other road users?
Have I given way to self pity, brooded over injuries or refused to forgive?
Have I been considerate, kind and generous to others in thought and deed?

“Neither shall you commit adultery” (Deuteronomy 5:18)

Have I committed adultery?
Have I failed to show love, respect and understanding to my marriage partner or been careless about my marriage vows?
Have I used forms of birth control forbidden by the Church?
Have I mistreated my spouse verbally, emotionally, physically, or by prolonging disagreements through resentment, or failing to apologise when I have been wrong?

“You shall not steal” (Deuteronomy 5:19)

Have I taken anything which did not belong to me - have I returned it?
Have I been dishonest at work and wasted my employer’s time and resources?
Do I pay a fair wage to those who work for me?
Have I been lazy at work, in study, or in the home?
Have I been guilty of cheating or gambling rashly?

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour” (Deuteronomy 5:20)

Have I told lies - have I encouraged others to do the same?
Am I guilty of rash judgment, calumny or detraction?
Have I gossiped casually, or in a more serious manner?
Have I betrayed confidences without good cause or revealed things simply to hurt other people?

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s spouse” (Deuteronomy 5:21)

Have I looked at indecent films, magazines, newspapers, books, pictures or internet websites?
Have I deliberately thought about impure things or looked on other persons impurely.
Have I conducted myself properly with the opposite sex?
Have I misused the gift of sexuality with myself or others - fornication and homosexual acts?

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods” (Deuteronomy 5:21)

Have I been obsessively envious or jealous of others and their possessions?
Have I committed acts of vandalism?
Have I been a source of scandal to others by my behaviour?
Have I encouraged others by my bad example to sin?

Outline for Making a Good Confession

Enter the Confessional, kneel down, and begin by making the Sign of the Cross - *“In the name of the Father + and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Please bless me Father, for I have sinned”*

It is a help if you can tell the priest roughly how long it is since you were last at Confession. Say the sins that you remember after considering the Examination of Conscience. Write them on a piece of paper if this makes confessing them any easier, but remember to destroy the paper as soon as you can to protect your privacy! It can be a good idea to start with the sins that are hardest to say. If you are not sure how to continue, or feel uneasy or ashamed, then just ask the priest to help you, that is what he is there to do. The priest may then ask you some questions to help you make a better Confession. Once you have finished confessing all the sins that you can remember you can end by saying:-

“I am sorry for all these my sins and for any that I cannot now remember.”

The priest will now talk to you and give you a penance which is usually a prayer. You can ask him questions if there is anything that you are not sure about. He will ask you to then say an Act of Contrition. Here is one that you might find helpful.

“O my God, because You are so good, I am sorry for having offended You, and by the help of Your grace, I will try not to sin again.”

Wait while the priest says the Prayer of Absolution, where Christ, through His priest, forgives all your sins. Make the Sign of the Cross when the priest says, “. . . I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father + and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

After Confession

If the priest asked you to say some prayers for your penance, you should say them now while you are still in the church. Otherwise, try to do your penance as soon as you can. After your penance is done say a prayer to thank God for forgiving your sins. You might find this prayer helpful.

“O God, I thank You for forgiving me my sins. I will try now to love You with all my heart, mind and soul and I will try to love others too. Help me by Your grace. Amen.