

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

How To Go To Confession

1. Examine your conscience. You can use the Ten Commandments as a guide or the "Beatitudes" (Matthew Ch. 5).
2. After the priest greets you with the Sign of the Cross make the Sign of the Cross and say: "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession. These are my sins."
3. Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. You might even want to discuss the circumstances and the root causes of your sins and ask the priest for advice or direction. You have to confess mortal sins and give a sense of how often. Don't be embarrassed.
4. Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then make an Act of Contrition for your sins.
5. The priest will then conclude with the words: "Go in Peace". You respond: "Thanks be to God."
6. Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible.

An Act of Contrition

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. Amen.

An Examination of Conscience

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

Do I give God time every day in prayer?

Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart?

Have I been involved with superstitious practices or have I been involved with the occult?

Do I seek to surrender myself to God's word as taught by the Church?

Have I ever received communion in the state of mortal sin?

Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession or have I withheld a mortal sin from the priest in Confession?

Are there other "gods" in my life? Money, Security, Power, People, etc.?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?

Have I wished evil upon any other person?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?

Have I tried to observe Sunday as a family day and a day of rest?

Do I do needless work on Sunday?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

Do I honor and obey my parents?

Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?

Have I given my family good religious example?

Do I try to bring peace into my home life?

Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

5. You shall not kill.

Have I had an abortion or encouraged or helped anyone to have an abortion?

Have I physically harmed anyone?

Have I abused alcohol or drugs?

Did I give scandal to anyone, thereby leading him or her into sin?

Have I been angry or resentful?

Have I harbored hatred in my heart?

Have I mutilated myself through any form of sterilization?

Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?

Have I engaged, in any way, in sins against human life such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization?

Have I participated in or approved of euthanasia?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?

Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control in my marriage?

Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as mere objects?

Do I seek to be pure in my thoughts, words, actions?

Am I careful to dress modestly?

7. You shall not steal.

Have I stolen what is not mine?

Do I waste time at work, school, and home?

Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying my family of their needs?

Do I pay my debts promptly?

Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

Have I cheated anyone out of what is justly theirs, for example creditors, insurance companies, big corporations?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I lied? Have I gossiped?

Do I speak badly of others behind their back?

Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?

Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

Have I injured the reputation of others by slanders?

9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

Have I consented to impure thoughts?

Have I caused them by impure reading, movies, television, conversation or curiosity?

Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?

Have I behaved in an inappropriate way with members of the opposite sex: flirting, being superficial, etc.?

10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.

Am I jealous of what other people have?

Do I envy the families or possessions of others?

Am I greedy or selfish?

Are material possessions the purpose of my life?