



GUIDE TO CONFESSION

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit for self-knowledge and trust in the mercy of God. Examine your conscience using the guide below before going to Confession.
2. Go to the priest and begin with the Sign of the Cross. Welcoming you, the priest will say: "May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy," or similar words taken from Scripture. You answer: "Amen." Then say, "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been ____ weeks/ months/years since my last confession (OR - this is my first confession)."
3. Continue by confessing your sins...

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

In the Sacrament of Penance the Faithful who confess their sins to a Priest, are sorry for those sins and have a purpose of amendment, receive from God, through the absolution given by that Priest, forgiveness of sins they have committed after Baptism, and at the same time they are reconciled with the Church, which by sinning they wounded. (Canon 959)

I. "I am the Lord, thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."

- Have I sinned against Religion by seriously believing in New Age, Scientology, Astrology, Horoscopes, Fortune-telling, Superstition or engaging in the Occult? Did I endanger my Catholic Faith or cause scandal by associating with anti-Catholic groups & associations (e.g., the Freemasons)? Have fame, fortune, money, career, pleasure, etc. replaced God as my highest priority? Have I neglected my daily prayers?

II. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

- Have I committed blasphemy by using the name of God and Jesus Christ to swear rather than to praise? Have I committed sacrilege by showing disrespect to holy objects (crucifix, rosary) or contempt for religious persons (bishop, priests, deacons, women religious) or for sacred places (in Church). Have I committed sacrilege by going to Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin without first going to confession e.g., after missing Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day? Did I violate the one-hour fast before Communion? Did I break the laws of fast and abstinence during Lent? Did I neglect my Easter duty to receive Holy Communion at least once? Have I neglected to support the Church and the poor by sharing my time, talent and treasure?

III. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

- Did I miss Mass on any Sunday or Holyday of Obligation? (Bad weather and being sick do not count) Have I shown disrespect by leaving Mass early, not paying attention or not joining in the prayers? Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday which could have been done the day before? Have I been stingy in my support for the Church? Do I give of my time & talent?

IV. Honor thy Father and Mother.

- Parents: Have I set a bad example for my children by casually missing Mass, neglecting prayer, or ignore my responsibility to provide a Catholic education by either sending my children to parochial school or to C.C.D. (Religious Education Program)? Do I show little or no interest in my children's faith and practice of it? Have I showed disrespect for those in authority, government or church? Have I not expressed my moral values to them?
- Teens: Have I been disobedient and/or disrespectful to my parents or guardians? Did I neglect to help them with household chores? Have I caused them unnecessary worry and anxiety by my attitude, behavior, moods, etc.?

V. Thou shalt not kill.

- Did I consent, recommend, advise, approve, support or have an abortion? Did I realize that there is an excommunication for anyone who procures an abortion? Did I actively or passively cooperate with an act of euthanasia whereby ordinary means were stopped or means taken to directly end the life of an elderly or sick person? Have I committed an act of violence or abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or verbal)? Have I endangered the lives of others by reckless driving or by driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol? Do I show contempt for my body by neglecting to take care of my own health? Have I been mean or unjust to anyone? Have I held a grudge or sought revenge against someone who wronged me? Do I point out others' faults and mistakes while ignoring my own? Do I complain more than I compliment? Am I ungrateful for what other people do for me? Do I tear people down rather than encourage them? Am I prejudiced against people because of their color, language or ethnic-religious background?

VI. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

- Did I consent to impure glances? Passionate kisses? Sinful touches? Did I give my mind over to lustful thoughts or fantasies? Was I immodest in dress or behavior? Did I look at pornography, impure books, magazines, or videos? Am I guilty of impurity with myself or with others? Do I avoid laziness, gluttony, idleness, and the occasions of impurity?

IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

- Did I have any sex before or outside of marriage? Do I view pornographic material (magazines, videos, internet, hot-lines)? Have I gone to massage parlors or adult book stores? Did I commit the sins of masturbation and/or artificial contraception? Have I not avoided the occasions of sin (persons or places) which would tempt me to be unfaithful to my spouse or to my own chastity? Do I encourage and entertain impure thoughts and desires? Do I tell or listen to dirty jokes? Have I committed fornication or adultery?

VII. Thou shalt not steal.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

- Have I stolen any object, committed any shoplifting or cheated anyone of their money? Did I knowingly deceive someone in business or commit fraud? Have I shown disrespect or even contempt for other people's property? Have I done any acts of vandalism? Am I greedy or envious of another's goods? Do I let financial and material concerns or the desire for comfort override my duty to God, to Church, to my family or my own spiritual well-being?

VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

- Have I told a lie in order to deceive someone? Have I told the truth with the purpose and intention of ruining someone's reputation (sin of detraction)? Have I told a lie or spread rumors which may ruin someone's reputation (sin of calumny or slander)? Did I commit perjury by false swearing an oath on the Bible? Am I a busybody or do I love to spread gossip and secrets about others? Do I love to hear bad news about my enemies?

ACT OF CONTRITION

After you finish confessing your sins, the priest may offer some words of encouragement or advice. Then he will give you your penance. He will then ask you to recite the Act of Contrition before giving you Absolution.

**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.**