

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

An Examination of Conscience

The Act of Contrition

O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,
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 Thee, my God,
Who are all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace,
to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.
Amen.

How to make a good confession...

Before Confession:

- Examine your conscience. Spend time in prayer figuring out what sins you have committed since your last good confession.

After Confession:

- Do your penance as soon as possible
- Spend time in prayer thanking the Lord for His mercy.

Between Confessions:

- Go to confession often, make it a routine.
- Take note of what leads you to sin and make efforts to avoid those situations.

Prayer before Confession:

Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind that I may clearly know my sins. Move my heart that I may be sincerely sorry for them, honestly confess them and firmly resolve to amend my life. Spirit of Wisdom, grant me to see the malice of sin and my ingratitude toward You, the all-loving God. Spirit of Fortitude, help me to make whatever sacrifice is needed to avoid sin in the future. Amen.

How to go to confession:

- Begin by making the sign of the cross and saying, "Forgive me Father for I have sinned. It has been _____ (state approximately how long it has been) since my last confession."
- List your sins. You may write them down to help you remember what you need to confess.
- The priest may offer you advice or counsel.
- Say your Act of Contrition. An Act of Contrition should express sorrow over the sins committed and a desire to overcome sin in the future. The Act of Contrition may also be said before or after confession if the priest does not ask for it.
- The priest will assign a penance as a means of repairing the damage done by sin.
- The priest will extend his hands over you and offer you the words of absolution, granting you forgiveness and sacramental grace.

The Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2-17)

I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me.

- Did I fail to acknowledge, love, thank or trust God, or to make him a priority in my life?
- Did I fail to pray daily?
- Have I denied my faith?
- Have I made anything else more important than God, like my image, my possessions, my work, or my relationships?
- Have I been involved with magic, Ouija boards or fortune telling, etc?

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

- Did I offend God in my speech or with crude profanity?
- Did I use God's name in vain or any time in which I was not addressing or referring to Him?
- Have I made or passively listened to slander or jokes demeaning to God or His Church?

Keep holy the Sabbath day.

- Did I intentionally skip Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation?
- Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of serious sin?
- Did I observe the fasts and days of abstaining from meat during Lent?

Honor your father and your mother.

- Did I respect and obey my parents and other family members?
- Did I respect those with authority, including teachers, employers, etc.?
- Did I fail to help with the needs of my family and household?
- Have I shown respect for the elderly?

You shall not kill

- Did I injure another physically or emotionally with my words or actions?
- Did I mistreat my body with drugs or alcohol?
- Have I had or permitted abortion?
- Did I use or cause someone to use birth control pills for the sake of contraception?
- Did I take part in or approve of euthanasia ("mercy killing")
- Have I injured another's reputation with my words?

You shall not commit adultery

- Did I consent to lustful looks or impure touches?
- Was I immodest in my dress or behavior?
- Did I look at pornography?
- Have I engaged in sex outside of marriage
- Have I participated in or encouraged homosexual activity?
- Have I committed impure acts by myself?

You shall not steal

- Have I intentionally taken or ruined what was not mine?
- Have I helped others steal?
- Have I cheated?
- Did I fail to work when being compensated to do so?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

- Have I lied or gossiped?
- Have I told others what should have been kept confidential?
- Have I condoned prejudice or hatred towards others?

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife

- Have I consented to my impure thoughts of another?
- Have I encouraged the impure thoughts of others towards me?
- Did I respect all members of the opposite sex?
- Did I view others as objects?

You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

- Is my heart greedy?
- Am I jealous?
- Do I continually compare myself with others?
- Am I upset when good things happen to others?
- Is my heart set on earthly possessions more than the treasures of heaven?
- Did I fail to give generously to those in need?