

THE SACRAMENT OF  
**CONFESSION**

A Guide to  
Returning to the Father's Embrace



CHRIST THE REDEEMER PARISH

# WELCOME HOME.

The confessional is a place of mercy, a place to start over, a place to experience the unending and unconditional love our Heavenly Father has for us and so desires to pour out over us.



*Many humble people confess to having fallen again. The most important thing in the life of every man and every woman is not that they should never fall along the way. The important thing is always to get back up,*

*not to stay on the ground licking your wounds. The Lord of mercy always forgives me; he always offers me the possibility of starting over.*

*-Pope Francis, The Name of God is Mercy*

This booklet will guide you through Confession, including an Examination of Conscience and all the steps of the Sacrament, to ensure you get the fullest experience of God's mercy.

# Making a good Confession

Adapted from *Our Sunday Visitor*

Three acts are required from the penitent for forgiveness through the sacrament: contrition, confession, and penance.

- **Contrition** is sincere sorrow for having offended God; the most important act of the penitent. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve to not repeat our sin.
- **Confession** requires confronting our sins in a profound way before God by acknowledging them aloud to a priest.
- **Penance** is given to the penitent by the priest as a way to make amends for sin. This is *not* punishment! It is an important step for our healing and for mending the damages our sin has caused.



The first step to a good confession is preparation—by doing an examination of conscience; one such examination can be found starting on the next page.

# EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

## **I. 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?... eg. money, power, people?

## **II. 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 been angry with God?
- Have I wished evil upon any other person?
- Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

## **III. 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?

## **IV. 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?

## **V. 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?

## **VI. You shall not commit adultery.**

- Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?
- Have I engaged in any sexual activity outside of marriage?
- Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control in my marriage?
- Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?
- Have I watched porn, or engaged in masturbation?
- Do I seek to control my thoughts and imaginations?
- Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as mere objects?
- Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity?
- Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words, actions?
- Am I careful to dress modestly?

## **VII. You shall not steal.**

- Have I stolen what is not mine?
- Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?
- 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?

### **VIII. 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 sincere in my dealings with others?
- 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?

### **IX. 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.?

### **X. 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?

## **PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION**

O most merciful God! Prostrate at your feet, I implore your forgiveness. I sincerely desire to leave all my evil ways and to confess my sins with all sincerity to you and to your priest. I am a sinner, have mercy on me, O Lord. Give me a lively faith and a firm hope in the Passion of my Redeemer. Give me, for your mercy's sake a sorrow for having offended so good a God. Mary, my mother, refuge of sinners, pray for me that I may make a good confession. Amen.

## GOING TO CONFESSION

1. You always have the option to go to confession anonymously, that is, behind a screen, or face to face, if you so desire.
2. After the priest greets you in the name of Christ, make the sign of the cross. He may choose to recite a reading from Scripture, after which you 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.
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 dismiss you with the words of praise: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. You respond: "**For His mercy endures forever.**" The priest will then conclude with: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying: "**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. Later often turns into never—do it now!

## ACT OF CONTRITION

Oh 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.



*“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”*

*-Proverbs 28:13*



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