

## Going to Confession

- 1. Make a good examination of conscience.**  
(See the inside of this pamphlet.)
- 2. Begin**  
Say "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was [ *mention how long it has been. If it's been a while, that's okay!*]. These are my sins..."
- 3. Mention your sins.**  
*It's not necessary to tell the "story of the sin" but only the sin. The priest may ask a clarifying question if necessary. Be not afraid! If you can remember the number of times you've committed each sin, that can be helpful for the priest too.*
- 4. Listen**  
*The priest may offer a few words of counsel.*
- 5. Receive your Penance**  
*The priest will then assign a penance, usually taking the form of prayers to say or a pious action to perform.*
- 6. Say The Act of Contrition**  
*If you're attending a penance service (like this one) you may have already said it communally, in which case the priest may not ask you to say it again.*
- 7. Listen**  
*The priest then prays the prayer of absolution in which he calls the Holy Spirit down to forgive your sins. As he makes the sign of the cross over you, it's customary to make the sign of the cross yourself.*
- 8. Respond**  
*There are several formulas for dismissal the priest may use. Here are a few common ones:*  
  
**Priest:** Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good...  
**You:** ...his mercy endures forever!  
  
and/or:  
  
**Priest:** Your sins are forgiven, go in peace.  
**You:** Thanks be to God!

### Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

## A Penance Service

**Priest:** In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Priest:** Dear brothers and sisters, listen to these words from the Holy Gospel according to Luke:

"What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it. And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

**Priest:** The Gospel of the Lord

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Priest:** Brothers and sisters, let us kneel and ask forgiveness for our sins.

*All kneel.*

**All:** I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.

*All strike their breast.*

Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen.

**Priest:** Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy

**Priest:** Christ, have mercy.

**All:** Christ, have mercy

**Priest:** Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy

*All are seated. The priest introduces confessors and confession stations. All then go to confession individually. At the conclusion of your confession, please feel free to remain in church or depart at your leisure.*

# A Brief Examination of Conscience

## *Based on the Ten Commandments*



### **I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.**

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

### **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

### **Remember to keep holy the LORD's Day.**

Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1; the Ascension; Aug. 15; Nov. 1; Dec. 8; Dec. 25)? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

### **Honor your father and your mother.**

Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

### **You shall not kill.**

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

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

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

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

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

### **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

### **Christ's Two Commandments**

How well do we love God and others? Do we love as Christ calls us to? In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ gives us Two Commandments: "He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments'" (Mt 22:37-40).

Not sure what love is? St. Paul describes it for us in his Letter to the Corinthians. Is this how you love God and others? "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

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*Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation*