

Short Guide for Confession

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Recall your sins. Calmly ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's and the Church's Commandments.

- When was my last good Confession? Did I receive Holy Communion or other sacraments in the state of mortal sin? Did I intentionally fail to confess some mortal sin in my previous Confession?
- Did I seriously doubt my faith or put myself in danger of losing my faith through readings or movies hostile to Catholic teachings or involvement in non-Catholic sects? Did I engage in superstitious practices: palm-reading, fortune telling, horoscopes, etc.?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I use curse words, or take a false oath?
- Did I intentionally miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation through my own fault, without any serious reason? Did I keep fast and abstinence on the prescribed days?
- Did I disobey, dishonor, or disrespect my parents or lawful superiors in important matters?
- Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Did I hurt or cause to kill someone? Have I ever harmed myself? Did I get drunk? Did I take illicit drugs? Did I consent to, recommend, advise or actively take part in an abortion?
- Did I willfully look at indecent pictures or watch immoral movies? Did I read immoral books or magazines? Did I engage in impure jokes or conversations? Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or feelings? Did I commit impure acts, alone or with others? Did I take contraceptive or abortifacient pills or use other artificial means in order to prevent conception?
- Did I steal or damage another's property? How much? Have I made reparation for the damages done? Have I been dishonest in my business relations?
- Did I tell lies? Did I sin by calumny, or detraction telling the unknown grave faults of others without necessity, even if they are true? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters? Have I tried to make restitution for the bad reputation I caused?

If you remember other serious sins besides those indicated here, mention them in your Confession.

BEFORE CONFESSION

Be truly sorry for your sins. "The essential act of Penance, on the part of the penitent, is contrition, a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed, together with a resolution not to commit it again, out of the love one has for God and which is reborn with repentance.

DURING CONFESSION

- You can begin your confession by making the sign of the cross and greeting the priest: **"Bless me father, for I have sinned."**
- You may continue with the time since your last confession:
"My last confession was . . . (how many weeks, months or years approximately)."
- Say the sins that you remember. Start with the one that is most difficult to say, after this it will be easier to mention the rest.
- If you do not know how to confess, or feel uneasy or ashamed, simply ask the priest to assist you. Be assured he will help you make a good confession. Simply answer the questions without hiding anything out of shame or fear. Place your trust in God: he is your merciful Father and wants to forgive you.
- If you do not remember any serious sins, be sure to confess at least some of your venial sins, adding at the end: **"I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life, especially for . . . (mention in general any past sin for which you are particularly sorry, for example all my sins against charity, purity, etc.)."**
- The priest will assign you some penance and give you some advice to help you to be a better Christian.
- Then you will be asked to recite the Act of Contrition prayer out loud:

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

- Listen to the words of the absolution attentively. At the end answer: **"Amen."** Be willing to do the penance as soon as possible. This penance will diminish the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

AFTER CONFESSION

Give thanks to God for forgiving you again. If you recall some serious sin you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others, but be sure to confess it in your next Confession.