

A Guide to Confession

The Rite of Penance

Before entering the confessional, take the time to make a good EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE (see below) to determine all sins which need to be reconciled with God and the Church.

AFTER the SIGN of the CROSS:
“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been -(state the length of time)- since my last confession. These are my sins...”

Now, mention the sins you are to confess. Mortal sins must be confessed in sacramental Confession to be forgiven. Venial sins may be confessed in general terms.

“I am sorry for these, and all the sins of my past.”

The priest may say a few words, then assigns your penance.

Then you pray the Act of Contrition:

ACT of CONTRITION

“O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest my sins because of your just punishments, 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.”

ABSOLUTION

The priest prays the words of absolution.

Following individual Confession, complete the penance required.

An Examination of Conscience

Loving God: we, your family, approach your throne of infinite mercy with contrite hearts for the times when...

...we have rejected you, or chosen to satisfy our own desires or convenience above our obligation to you.

...we have let our pride stand against you and your Church.

...we have missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days, or have caused others to do so.

...we have abused your holy name and used language unworthy of your children.

...we have chosen to lack trust and practical faith in your promises.

...we have been neglectful in the responsibilities of our spiritual life of prayer and active good works; we have not participated fully in the Mass or daily prayers.

...we have taken the sacredness of your covenant for granted by receiving Communion unworthily or presumed on your mercy.

...we have let hatred or anxiety get a hold of our hearts.

...we have let our selfishness stand against our love of others, serving ourselves at their expense.

...we have not been tolerant and accepting of others, sometimes falling into criticism or judgment.

...we have been disrespectful or disobedient of others, particularly those who deserve our obedience and respect.

...we have not followed through with teaching our children what they must learn from us about our faith in God.

...we have sought to harm others out of anger or jealousy, or had ill will toward them.

...we have gossiped about others or sought to ruin their reputation to increase our own popularity.

...we have been dishonest or cheated, or taken what is not our own.

...we have fallen in our thoughts or deeds with impurity.

...we have allowed indecency to influence us, perhaps through movies, television or other media which is inappropriate.

...we have been an occasion of sin to others by immodest dress or behavior.

...we have fallen into sexual sin before or outside of marriage, or have selfishly sought to take rather than to give in our relationships.

...we have sinned against your gift of life by using birth control or abortion.

...we have lived intemperately, or abused alcohol or drugs, or used dangerous or illegal substances.

...we have allowed material possessions to have too much importance in our lives, or given into greed.

...we have failed in being patient or generous.