

# ***A GUIDE TO CONFESSION***

Experience the Mercy of God



*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans

5:8

## Five Steps for a Good Confession

1. Examine your conscience.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After your confession, do the penance the priest assigns.

*Don't be hasty \* Don't be superficial \* Avoid anxiety*

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## A More Thorough Examination of Conscience for Adults

*(The first step to a good confession is to examine your conscience. The list below is based on the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the Church. You may find this list helpful in your preparation for Sacramental Confession. If you have questions about anything listed here, please feel comfortable to speak to the priest.)*

- Did I deny or doubt God's existence?
- Did I refuse to believe God's revelation?
- Did I believe or partake in fortune telling, tarot cards, good luck charms or reincarnation?
- Did I deny that I was a Catholic? Did I leave the Catholic faith?
- Did I despair of or presume on God's mercy?
- Did I neglect prayer for a long time?
- Did I blaspheme God or take God's name in vain, curse or break an oath or vow?
- Did I miss Mass on Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- Was I inattentive at Mass? Did I come to Mass late? Did I leave Mass early?
- Did I observe the Lord's Day by prayer and rest?
- Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors?
- Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children, or parents?
- Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children? Have I failed to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?
- Did I give a full day's work in return for my full day's pay?
- Did I give a fair wage to my employee?

Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?  
Was I the cause of anyone leaving the faith?  
Was I impatient, angry, envious, unkind, proud, jealous, revenge-ful,  
hateful towards others, lazy? Did I give a bad example, abuse  
drugs, drink alcohol to excess, fight or quarrel?  
Did I physically injure or kill anyone? Did I attempt suicide?  
Did I have or advise an abortion?  
Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts and desires? Did I dress  
immodestly?  
Did I use impure or suggestive words? Tell impure stories? Or listen  
to them?  
Did I deliberately look at impure images by TV, Internet or movies?  
Did I perform impure acts by myself or with another, i.e., did I  
engage in masturbation, pre-marital sex or homosexual acts?  
Did I marry or advise another to marry outside the church?  
Did I abuse my marriage rights? Was I faithful to my wedding vows?  
Have I kept company with someone else's spouse?  
Did I practice artificial birth control or was I or my spouse sterilized?  
Did I attempt *in vitro* fertilization?  
Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal, or keep stolen  
goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?  
Did I fulfill my contracts: give or accept bribes; pay my bills and my  
taxes: rashly gamble or speculate; deprive my family of  
necessities of life?  
Did I tell lies? Deliberately to deceive; or injure others by lies?  
Did I commit perjury? Was I uncharitable in word or deed, gossip or  
reveal others' faults and sins? Fail to keep secrets I should  
have?  
Did I eat meat on the Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?  
Did I fulfill my Easter duty? Fail to confess at least once a year?  
Did I go to the Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin? Did I fast  
for one hour from food and drink?  
Did I make a bad confession?  
Did I fail to contribute to the support of the Church?

## Individual Confession:

Penitent: Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been  
(Tell how long) since my last confession.  
These are my sins.

*(Now confess all the sins you have committed since your last confession. When you have finished confessing your sins, say.)*

That is all, Father.

*(Now you listen to the words, advice and penance that the priest will give you, and when the priest tells you to, we say the **Act of Contrition**)*

O MY GOD, I AM HEARTILY SORRY FOR HAVING OFFENDED YOU AND I DETEST ALL MY SINS BECAUSE OF YOUR JUST PUNISHMENTS, BUT MOST OF ALL BECAUSE THEY OFFEND YOU, MY GOD, WHO ART ALL GOOD AND DESERVING OF ALL MY LOVE. I FIRMLY RESOLVE, WITH THE HELP OF YOUR GRACE, TO SIN NO MORE AND AVOID THE NEAR OCCASIONS OF SIN. AMEN

### The Absolution

*The priest extends his hand over the penitent's head and says the words of absolution (forgiveness). When the priest makes the sign of the cross over you, bless yourselves and say, AMEN.*

### The Dismissal

Priest: The Lord has freed you from your sins, go in peace.

Penitent: Amen. Thank you, Father.