

## HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

"The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship." Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament. For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation "is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation." Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true "spiritual resurrection," restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God."

~Catechism of the Catholic Church 1468

- 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..."
- 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.
- Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then say an Act of Contrition for your sins (see below).
- 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." You respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."
- 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.

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### 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.

### Act of Contrition

Oh My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all of my sins because of your just punishment, but most of all because they have offended thee my God who are all good and deserving of all of my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

# An Examination of Conscience

## **1. 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? Money, security, power, people, etc.

## **2. 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?

## **3. 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?

## **4. 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?

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

- ◆ Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone to have an abortion?
- ◆ Have I physically harmed anyone?
- ◆ Have I abused alcohol or drugs?
- ◆ Did I give scandal to anyone, thereby leading them 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?

## **6. 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?
- ◆ Do I seek to control my thoughts and imaginations?
- ◆ Have I respected all members of the opposite sex? Or have I thought of others as mere objects?
- ◆ Have I been guilty of any impure activity?
- ◆ Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words, and actions?
- ◆ Am I careful to dress modestly?

## **7. 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, or 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 ex., creditors, insurance co., big corp.?

## **8. 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?

## **9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.**

- ◆ Have I consented to impure thoughts?
- ◆ Have I caused them by impure reading, movies, conversation, or curiosity?
- ◆ Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?

## **10. 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?