



CONFESSION GUIDE

FOR ADULTS

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners”
(Mark 2:17).



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TOGETHER



Why CONFESSION MATTERS?

Jesus gave us the ***Sacrament of Confession*** (also called Reconciliation) when He breathed on His Apostles and said,
"Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you retain, they are retained"
(John 20:22-23).

Through the apostles, this authority has been passed down to priests today. Confession is the usual and ordinary way to receive forgiveness for mortal sins committed after baptism. While God can forgive outside the sacrament, we should not presume on extraordinary means. Like all sacraments, Confession also strengthens our soul with God's grace.



How to MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION?

The key to a meaningful confession is **contrition**—a sincere turning away from sin with the determination to avoid it in the future (*see Ezekiel 33:11; John 8:11*).

Before confession, take time to **examine your conscience**. During confession, be honest and humble in naming your sins. You don't need to provide excessive detail—focus on the nature of the sin and circumstances that affect its seriousness.

What DO I NEED TO CONFESS?

- **All known mortal sins** must be confessed, including approximate frequency.
- **Venial sins** do not require confession but confessing them is spiritually helpful.

A **mortal sin** is serious and meets three conditions:

1. Grave matter (serious in nature)
2. Full knowledge
3. Deliberate consent

Like a patient showing a wound to a doctor, we must be willing to confess all mortal sins to be fully healed. After a good confession, you will usually experience peace and relief.

What if I SUDDENLY FORGET MY SIN?

If you forget a mortal sin, it is still forgiven but must be confessed in your next confession. If unsure whether you confessed a sin before, there is no obligation—but it is wise to do so.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A priest **cannot** reveal what you confess. Your sins remain completely confidential.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

ASK YOURSELF HONESTLY BEFORE CONFESSION:



I. I am the LORD your God: You shall not have strange gods before Me

- Have I intentionally hidden a mortal sin in a previous confession?
- Have I received Communion while in a state of mortal sin?
- Have I prioritized wealth, pleasure, or other things over God?
- Have I rejected any Catholic teachings or embraced non-Christian beliefs?
- Have I disrespected the Church or its leaders?
- Have I engaged in occult or superstitious practices?
- Have I neglected daily prayer?

II. You shall not take the Name of the LORD in vain

- Have I used God's name disrespectfully?
- Have I broken an oath or promise to God?

III. Keep holy the LORD's Day

- Have I missed Mass on Sundays or holy days without a valid reason?
- Have I been late or left early from Mass on purpose?
- Have I observed the one-hour fast before Communion?
- Have I shown respect during Mass (dress, behavior)?
- Have I fasted or abstained as required?
- Have I allowed work to interfere with worship, rest, or family time?

IV. Honor your father and mother

- Have I respected my parents, especially in old age?
- Have I obeyed lawful authority?
- Have I treated my children justly and educated them in faith?
- Have I protected my children from moral or spiritual harm?



V. You shall not kill

- Have I harmed, wished harm, or wished hell upon anyone?
- Have I had an abortion, supported abortion, euthanasia, or IVF that destroys embryos?
- Have I been angry, hateful, racist, or vengeful?
- Have I refused forgiveness?
- Have I endangered life, abused substances, or neglected health?
- Have I attempted suicide or seriously considered it?
- Have I scandalized others spiritually?

VI. You shall not commit adultery

- Have I been unfaithful or engaged in sexual activity outside marriage?
- Have I viewed pornography or participated in sexual misconduct?
- Have I used contraception or been sterilized?
- Have I married outside the Church without permission?

VII. You shall not steal

- Have I stolen, damaged property, or cheated?
- Have I wasted time, money, or resources?
- Have I failed to care for the poor or contribute to the Church?

VIII. You shall not bear false witness

- Have I lied, gossiped, or harmed someone's reputation?
- Have I judged unfairly or covered someone else's sins?

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse

- Have I entertained impure thoughts or desires for someone else's spouse?
- Have I kept my eyes and thoughts pure?

X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

- Have I been envious or greedy?



How to GO TO CONFESSION

1. Begin with **the Sign of the Cross:**

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

2. The priest may say a prayer or Scripture passage.

3. Say:

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been ___ (weeks/months/years) since my last confession. These are my sins..."

4. Confess your sins, including approximate frequency. For mortal sins, frequency is required.

5. Finish with:

"For these and all the sins of my past life, I am sorry."

6. Perform the penance given by the priest.

7. Say an **Act of Contrition:**

"My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, have mercy on me, my God."

8. Listen as the priest pronounces absolution, especially the words: "I absolve you from your sins."

9. When the priest concludes, respond: "Thanks be to God."