

"I will get up and go to My father" (Lk 15:18)
Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation - A short Guide

When was the last time you went for confession? If it has been a while, don't waste another day! Go to the priest and confess. Jesus will be there and he will receive you. He will receive you with much love so be courageous and go to confession. Do not be afraid of confession. You will experience the sacrament of reconciliation with a renewed depth and you will taste the forgiveness and infinite mercy of God. It is to pass from misery to mercy. When you stand in line to confess you may feel shameful, but after you finish confessing, you may feel free, beautiful, forgiven, clean, and clear of your conscience. The center of the confession is not the sins you declare, but rather the divine love you receive, by confessing your sins. When you go for confession, it is to be healed from within; to heal your soul. (Reflection on Confession by Pope Francis on 2019)

Five Basic Steps for proper Confession

1. Examination of Conscience

Examination of conscience is to recall to mind all sins of thought, word and deed against the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church, the theological virtues, capital sins and their opposite virtues and above all against the love of God, committed after the previous confession.

2. Repentance

Repentance is our heart-felt sorrow over the sins committed. It should be genuine. We should be sorry for offending the loving God through sin.

3. Resolution

If only there is genuine repentance, one can take a firm resolution not to sin any more. This resolution, not to sin any longer, is an important factor for a good confession.

4. Confession

After making the examination of conscience, one has to confess one's sins to the priest. One confesses one's sins to the priest only after saying the 'Prayer of Repentance' and the prayer called 'Maudyonuso'. All sins are to be clearly confessed, remembering that one is standing in the presence of God. One should not hide any sin purposely for any reason. One should request absolution for sins from the priest after relating the sins.

5. Penance

The priest gives necessary advice and instructions. Then the priest suggests retribution for the sins committed. This is called penance. You have to fulfil this penance assigned by the priest at the earliest with humility and with a sense of sorrow.

Prayers during the Confession

Preparation- Supplication

O God the Holy Spirit, enlighten my conscience and grant me the grace to know my sins, to understand the gravity of them, and to

have a sincere conversion of heart. Grant me also the grace to call upon you and to show contrition for my sins. O Mary, refuge of sinners, intercede on my behalf that I may see the wickedness of my ways and show contrition for my sins. My beloved guardian angel, pray for me that this confession I will make will be my last and that I will no longer sin against our great and holy God.

Prayer of Repentance

Almighty and Eternal God, you are the Divine Master, and, I am but a lowly slave who has sinned against you. In my wickedness, I thought harm against you, the Font of all-goodness. By my sins I nailed you to the Cross, O Lord. Woe to me for I am the cause of your holy wounds and bloodshed! By my sins I have damned my soul and become a slave to Satan, inheriting the eternal fires of Hell. 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, O God. With the prodigal I cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." Forgive me. "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your holy Spirit from me." I promise to sin no more. On account of your Most Beloved Son, O Eternal Father, have mercy on me, a sinner.

O my Jesus, the Lamb of God who take away the sin of the world, by the merits of your holy wounds, forgive my sins and bless me. With Mary Magdalene I kiss your feet. Accept this prodigal child, O Lord! Wash my soul with the Holy Blood which flows from your wounds. Mary Most Sorrowful, grant that I may reach my Lord again through your mediation. All you heavenly angels and saints, pray for me.

Mawdyoneetho

Before God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and before the Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and before all the saints and holy angels, and before the noble priesthood by which you loose and bind, O priest of God, I confess my sins. I am sinner! I am a grave sinner! On account of my sins I mourn. I wholeheartedly renounce my sins and seek refuge in the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus the Lord. I entreat you: Father, grant me absolution of my sins and bless me.

Here the penitent lists his sins, according to number and kind. The penitent ought not hide any sin out of fear but should confess all his/her sins openly to the priest. And afterwards, the penitent concludes, saying: *For these and all the sins of my past life, especially those I have named here and those I have forgotten, and the sins of my past, especially (...), I ask pardon of God, penance, and absolution from you.*

Act of Contrition

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

Thanksgiving after Confession

O Most Compassionate Lord God, my thanksgiving for all that you have done for me is insufficient. Until now I had been enslaved by my sins to the evil one. However, now I am your servant. On account of my sins, I de-served the eternal fires of hell but now by this Sacrament I am made worthy for the eternal joy of the kingdom of heaven.

Rite of Reconciliation-

Shorten version of the procedure of Confession

The priest will begin with the sign of the Cross and saying, *May Almighty God bless you to make a good confession.* The penitent begins by saying, *Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been... (number of days, week, months etc.) since my last confession. These are my sins...* At the end of the confession say, *for these and all the sins of my life, I am sorry.* Then the priest gives counsel and penance. Then, penitent makes the Act of Contrition. The priest gives the absolution (only after receiving the absolution, the penitent leaves the confessional). Finally, priest says, Go in peace.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1 *I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before Me.*
- 2 *You shall not take the holy name of God in vain.*
- 3 *Keep the day of God holy.*
- 4 *Honor your father and your mother.*
- 5 *You shall not kill.*
- 6 *You shall not commit adultery.*
- 7 *You shall not steal.*
- 8 *You shall not bear false witness.*
- 9 *Do not covet your neighbor's wife.*
- 10 *Do not covet your neighbor's property.*

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- Did I perform my duties toward God reluctantly or grudgingly?
- Did I neglect my prayer life? Did I recite my usual prayers?
- Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin or without the necessary preparation?
- Did I violate the one-hour Eucharistic fast?
- Did I fail to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?
- Did I seriously believe in something superstitious or engage in a superstitious practice (palm-reading or fortune telling for instance)?
- Did I seriously doubt a matter of Faith?
- Did I put my faith in danger — without a good reason — by accessing the Internet; reading a book, pamphlet, or magazine; or viewing movies and television programs that contain material contrary to the Catholic Faith or morals?
- Did I endanger my faith by joining or attending meetings of organizations opposed to the Catholic Faith? Did I take part in one of its activities?
- Have I committed the sin of sacrilege (profanation of a sacred person, place, or thing)?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

- Did I fail to try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions I made to God?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I make use of God's name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- Did I make use of the Blessed Virgin Mary's name or another saint's name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- Did I tell a lie under oath?
- Did I break (private or public) vows?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

- Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
- Did I fail to dress appropriately for Mass?
- Have I, without sufficient reason, arrived at Mass so late that I failed to fulfill the Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation?
- Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass, by not paying attention, looking around out of curiosity, etc.?
- Did I cause another to be distracted?
- Have I performed any work or business activity that would inhibit the worship due to God, the joy proper to the Lord's
- Day, or the appropriate relaxation of mind and body, on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
- Did I fail to generously help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?
- Did I fail to fast or abstain on a day prescribed by the Church?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT (FOR PARENTS)

- Have I neglected to teach my children their prayers, send them to church, or give them a Christian education?
- Have I given them bad example?
- Have I neglected to watch over my children, to monitor their companions, the books they read, the movies and TV shows they watch, or their use of the Internet?
- Have I failed to see to it that my children have received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; that they made First Confession and First Communion?

(FOR CHILDREN)

- Was I disobedient toward my parents or others in authority?
- Did I neglect to help my parents when my help was needed?
- Did I treat my parents with little affection or respect?
- Did I react proudly when I was corrected by my parents?
- Did I have a disordered desire for independence?
- Did I do my chores?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- Did I easily get angry or lose my temper?
- Was I envious or jealous of others?
- Did I injure or take the life of anyone? Was I ever reckless in driving?
- Was I an occasion of sin for others by way of conversation: the telling of jokes religiously, racially, or sexually offensive; my way of dressing; inviting somebody to attend certain shows; recommending inappropriate or immoral Web sites on the Internet; lending harmful books