

Preparation for Confession

With Examination of Conscience based on the 10 Commandments

“Confession is a sacrament of mercy. Therefore, one must approach the confessional with confidence and joy. Without confession there is no salvation.” (St. Jacinta, *Shepherdess of Fatima*)

To make a good confession one must:

1. Make a good **examination of conscience**.
2. **Be sincerely sorry** for the sins they committed which have so greatly offended God.
3. Have a **firm resolve** to sin no more.
4. **Confess** your sins to the priest, telling them with all sincerity, clarity and brevity; without hiding any serious sin and overcoming shame.
5. **Make reparation** for the wrong committed, fulfilling the penance that the confessor asks you to do.

Let us carefully examine our conscience, without anxiety or scruples, seeking to know the **type** (nature) and **number** of sins committed. The penitent can use the steps below as a guide when making a personal examination of conscience.

Individual Examination of Conscience

First Commandment: I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.

Have I deliberately consented to doubts against the Faith?

Do I seek to love God with my whole heart?

Am I ashamed of or denied my faith in front of others?

Have I neglected my daily prayers?

Have I used witchcraft, Wicca, or other Occult practices? Have I practiced various forms of superstition such as fortune tellers, mediums, ouija boards, tarot cards?

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?

Have I allowed myself to be overcome by discouragement? Or murmured against the designs of Divine Providence?

Have I participated in acts of different religions? Or unnecessarily frequented the religious services of other denominations?

Second Commandment: You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

Do I use God's name carelessly? Have I called down evil upon anyone or anything? Do I get angry with God?

Have I spoken against the Catholic religion or failed to defend it when it was my duty?

Have I completely or partially broken any vow or promise?

Third Commandment: Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day.

Have I, through my own fault, failed to come to Mass each Sunday and every holy day of obligation? Do I arrive at Mass late or leave early without good reason? Do I allow myself to be distracted at Mass? Have I worked on Sundays and holy days of obligation without necessity? Or obliged others to do so? Have I impeded others from attending Mass for no legitimate reason?

Fourth Commandment: Honour your father and your mother.

Have I disobeyed my parents or superiors, or treated them with disrespect? Or mistreated them through words or deeds? Or spoken ill of them? Have I purposely been a cause of sadness to them? Am I disrespectful, impolite, or discourteous toward my family? Have I been helpful in my home? Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children? Have I given my family good religious example? Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives? Have I lived in disharmony with my siblings? Or mistreated them? Have I wished them evil? Or given them bad examples?

Fifth Commandment: You shall not kill.

Have I reviled my neighbour? Have I become irate against someone? Have I purposely offended my neighbour? Have I used harsh or abusive language toward another? Have I harboured hatred of someone? Have I harboured sentiments of rancour and malevolence towards someone? Have I wished anyone evil? Do I act rudely, impolite, or ridicule others? Have I killed anyone? Or advised others to kill? Have I desired anyone's death? Have I desired death for myself? Did I have an abortion or help another to have an abortion? Have I participated in or approved of euthanasia? Have I purposely harmed my health in any way? Have I failed to provide necessary treatment for the sick under my care? Have I mistreated animals for pleasure, out of anger, or for fun? Have I scandalized my neighbour? Or caused him to sin? How many times? Or cooperated with my neighbour's sin? Have I prevented my neighbour from sinning when I should and could have? Have I mutilated my body or another's body? Do I act violently by fighting or hitting others? Have I taken illegal drugs or abused prescription drugs? Have I sold or distributed illegal drugs? Do I eat too much, or sleep too much? Do I drink beer or other alcoholic beverages in excess? Have I allowed myself to become intoxicated? Am I too concerned about my health or appearance?

Sixth and Ninth Commandments: You shall not commit adultery. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.

Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action? Have I voluntarily dwelt on impure thoughts or mental images? Have I culpably desired to see or do immodest things? Have I read impure material, listened to music with impure lyrics, or looked at impure images, whether in photos or on television or in movies or on the internet? Or passed them on for others to read or watch? Or written or drawn obscene things? Or shown, posted, or sold obscene literature, pictures, or objects?

... continuation of the previous page - Sixth and Ninth Commandments:

Have I sung censurable songs?

Have I looked at indecent things with malice? Was it looking at my body, or someone else's?

Have I sinned through impure touches? Or impure actions? Was it alone or in the company of others?

Before or after my marriage? Did it happen with persons of the same or the opposite sex? Were they single or married? Were they my relatives? Are there any aggravating, or special circumstances to disclose concerning any such sin?

Have I aroused indecent desire in myself or another by impure kissing, embracing, or touching?

Have I lacked modesty by getting dressed or undressed before others?

Have I given scandal by wearing indecent clothing?

Do I use vulgar language or tell or listen to impure jokes or stories?

Have I participated in immodest conversations? Or listened to them? Did it take place with people of the same sex, or of the opposite sex? Was it in the presence of children?

Have I participated in amusements that were dangerous to purity, such as dances, movies and so on?

Have I often been in bad company when I could have avoided it or put myself in other near occasions of sin for no legitimate reason?

Seventh and Tenth Commandments: You shall not steal. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

Have I taken anything that was not my own?

Have I considerably damaged another's property out of malice or negligence?

Have I advised anyone to steal, defraud or damage my neighbour's goods? Or cooperated with these injustices?

Have I accepted or bought stolen property?

Have I unjustly kept found objects in my possession?

Have I bribed someone? Do I gamble excessively? Have I borrowed something without the owner's permission? Have I failed to return something I borrowed? Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?

Do I waste money or spend it extravagantly? Have I harboured a greed for money or worldly possessions?

Have I caused loss to my neighbour's estate? Was it by mistake, fraud or by giving him ill advice? Was it a sizable loss?

Have I poorly performed the work I am committed to do?

Have I envied anyone?

Have I paid off my debts and bills? Have I paid my employees a just salary?

Have I presently any goods that I unjustly possess?

Eighth Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

Have I lied deliberately?

Have I hurt someone with my lies?

Have I unnecessarily revealed my neighbour's secret faults and defects?

Have I magnified my neighbour's true sins?

Have I attributed to him imaginary faults? Has this caused his reputation, or livelihood, considerable harm?

Have I allowed others to speak ill of my neighbour? Have I taken pleasure in such conversations?

Have I sown the seed of discord between friends through intrigue? Have I delved into or disclosed secrets concerning important matters? Or disclosed secrets confided to me? Or opened and read another's correspondence without permission?

Have I criticized anyone uncharitably?

Have I deliberately misled or deceived anyone?

Have I refused to forgive someone or held a grudge against him or her? Have I failed to apologize or make amends to someone I offended?

Have I been guilty of double-dealing or hypocrisy?

Other Considerations:

Have I been proud and vain?

Have I deliberately entertained proud thoughts and self-conceit?

Have I been stubborn and arrogant?

Have I been heartless and lacking in charity towards the poor?

Have I been envious?

Have I rejoiced over someone else's misfortune?

Have I obstinately defended actions which are sinful, either my own or others?

Have I spent useless time planted before the TV or internet?

The Commandments of the Church

Have I observed the days of fasting or abstinence established by the Church?

Have I failed to confess my sins at least once a year?

Have I failed to receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter season?

Have I failed to contribute alms to pious works? Have I denied alms to the needy?

For parents:

Have I raised my children to be virtuous? Have I taught them to pray?

Have I spoken ill or irreverently of teachers or superiors in the presence of my children, or allowed others to do so?

Have I been a bad example to them by not fulfilling my religious obligations, by imprudently speaking about sexual matters, or by giving into anger or other vices?

Have I failed to punish them when such was my duty? Or punished them immoderately or unjustly?

Have I removed all seductions of evil from my children's path? Have I allowed them to be in bad or suspicious company?

Have I been violent or irascible with them? Or mistreated them with words or deeds?

Did I force them to embrace a state for which they had no vocation or skill? Or prevented them from following their vocation?

Final Recommendations

Begin by confessing the sins you find most difficult. Don't worry, the priest will help you when necessary. Try to listen attentively to the advice received, and fulfil the penance as soon as possible.

Method for confessing

Approach the confessor, and say: *Bless me, Father for I have sinned. It has been (how long?) since my last confession and these are my sins...*(confess all your sins... be not afraid).

Father will give you a penance and then ask you to pray the Act of Contrition. Feel free to use this one:

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.