

PREPARE YOUR HEARTS

REFRESHER GUIDE TO RECONCILIATION



HOW TO CONFESS TO THE PRIEST

The priest will often begin with the Sign of the Cross or a greeting and blessing.

Please keep in mind, Confession is a sacrament. The purpose is to humble yourself before God, to confess your sins, receive absolution and to do penance. This is to cleanse your soul and to continue on living a faithful Catholic Life.

Counsel and guidance are always important with Confession, however the sacrament is not intended as a form of therapy to discuss personal worries, thoughts and interpersonal conflicts.

Do not be afraid to tell the priest any sin you may have committed. The priest is there to help you and forgive you. Nothing you say will shock him, so do not be afraid.



THE PROCESS

- +** **GREETING**
The priest will welcome you; he may say a short blessing or read a Scripture passage.
- +** **THE SIGN OF THE CROSS**
Together, you and the priest will make the Sign of the Cross, You may then begin your confession with these or similar words: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [give days, months, or years] since my last confession.
- +** **CONFESSION**
Confess all your sins to the priest. If you are unsure what to say, ask the priest for help. When you are finished, conclude with these or similar words: “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”
- +** **PENANCE**
The priest will propose an act of penance. The penance might be a prayer, a work of mercy, or an act of charity. He might also counsel you on how to better live a Christian life.
- +** **ACT OF CONTRITION**
After the priest has conferred your penance, pray an Act of Contrition, expressing sorrow for your sins and resolving to sin no more.
- +** **ABSOLUTION**
The priest will extend his hands over your heads and pronounce the words of absolution. You respond, “Amen.”

THE 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.



ALTERNATE VERSION THE 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, o sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.





EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I AM THE LORD THY GOD, THOU SHALT NOT HAVE ANY STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME

Have I treated people, events or things as more important than God?

YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN.

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the church, or people?

REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY.

*Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and allow for proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday? **(Dispensation is given during this pandemic)***

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.

Am I disrespectful, discourteous, or impolite toward my family? Did I cause tension or fights in my family? Have I neglected my duties to my family? Have I disobeyed the lawful demands of my superiors or an employer?

YOU SHALL NOT KILL.

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind? Have I harbored hatred in my heart for someone and wished evil upon them?

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself? Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words and actions?

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another? Have I gambled excessively, thereby denying my family or others their needs? Have I returned or made restitution for things I have stolen?

YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Have I slandered and manipulated others for my own benefit?

YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SPOUSE.

Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love? Have I been active and dedicated to my vows?

YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS.

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily? Do I resent others for what they have? Do I place too high of an importance on material goods and comforts that my neighbor has? Is my heart more set on earthly possessions?