

ACT OF CONTRITION

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

After this the priest will absolve the penitent in the following words: God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **The penitent makes the sign of the Cross and answers: Amen.**

The priest will then dismiss the penitent with a short prayer and encouragement. The penitent should then try to fulfill the penance imposed if it is something that can be done quickly.

Adapted from the Father's of Mercy Examination of Conscience.



AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR ADULTS

As you prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, ask God the Holy Spirit's help to examine your conscience well by prayerfully reviewing your conduct in light of the commandments and the example of Christ. The questions in this pamphlet should assist you in making a thorough review. Tell the priest the specific kind of sins you have committed and, to the best of your ability, how many times you have committed them since your last good confession.

To make a good confession, you need to confess any mortal (gravely serious) sins you have committed, since you can obtain forgiveness for your venial (smaller) sins by sacrifices, acts of charity, prayer and other pious actions. Confession of venial sins, however, is very helpful for avoiding sin and advancing in holiness toward Heaven. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent" (CCC 1857). If you are in doubt about whether a sin is mortal or venial, mention it to the priest.

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

1. The priest will greet you.
2. You, the penitent, say: **"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."** You then say how long it has been since your last Confession.
3. The penitent tells the priest his sins simply and in a straight forward manner (if mortal sin, make sure to give the kind of sin and approximate number of times the sin was committed).
4. The priest will give you some advice and will assign you a penance.
5. The penitent will next pray the **Act of Contrition** (see prayer under "Act of Contrition").
6. The priest then gives the penitent absolution.
7. The priest will then say: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good."
8. The penitent responds: **"His mercy endures forever."** The priest will then dismiss you.
9. The penitent carries out the assigned penance.

Remember that God loves you as a beloved son or daughter. The point of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to be restored to a relationship of holiness with this God who loves you. So, as you examine your conscience, focus more on the “God of the commandments” than the “commandments of God.” For that reason, ask God the Holy Spirit to give you real sorrow for the sins you’ve committed out of love for God and a deep resolve, out of sorrow, to try never to commit these sins again.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

- Did I** deny or doubt God’s existence?
- Did I** refuse to believe God’s revelation?
- Did I** believe in (or use) horoscopes, fortune telling, good luck charms, tarot cards, Ouija boards or reincarnation?
- Did I** deny that I was a Catholic?
- Did I** abandon the Catholic Faith for any period of time?
- Did I** despair of or presume on God’s mercy?
- Did I** neglect prayer for a long time?
- Did I** fail to pray daily?
- Did I** blaspheme God or take God’s Name in vain, curse or break an oath or vow?
- Did I** miss Mass on a Sunday or on a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- Am I** always reverent in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament?
- Was I** voluntarily inattentive at Mass?
- Did I** arrive at Mass late through my own fault?
- Did I** leave Mass early?
- Did I** do unnecessary servile work on Sunday?
- Did I** disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors?
- Did I** neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children or parents?

- Did I** fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?
- Have I** failed to educate myself concerning the teachings of the Church?
- Did I** give a full day’s work in return for a full day’s pay?
- Did I** give a fair wage to my employee(s)?
- Did I** give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?
- Did I** contribute to anyone’s abandoning of the Catholic Faith?
- Was I** impatient, angry, envious, unkind, proud, jealous, revengeful, hateful toward others or lazy?
- Did I** give bad example, abuse drugs, drink alcohol to excess, fight or quarrel?
- Did I** physically injure or kill anyone?
- Have I** had an abortion, or advised or supported an abortion?
- Did I** participate in or approve of the grave evil known as “mercy killing,” euthanasia or doctor assisted suicide?
- Did I** attempt suicide or physically harm myself?
- Did I** willfully entertain impure thoughts and desires?
- Did I** dress immodestly or provocatively?
- Did I** use impure or suggestive words?
- Did I** tell impure stories or listen to them?
- Did I** deliberately look at impure television, internet, plays, pictures or movies?
- Did I** deliberately read or send impure material?
- Did I** perform impure acts by myself (masturbation) or with another (adultery, fornication or sodomy)?
- Did I** marry or advise another to marry outside of the Church?
- Did I** abuse my marriage rights?

- Was I** unfaithful to my marriage vows?
- Have I** kept company with someone else’s spouse?
- Did I** practice artificial birth control or was I or my spouse permanently sterilized (tubal ligation or vasectomy)?
- Did I** steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal, cheat, or keep stolen goods?
- Have I** made restitution for stolen goods?
- Did I** deliberately fail to fulfill my contracts or to pay my bills? Did I give or accept bribes?
- Did I** rashly gamble or speculate or deprive my family of the necessities of life?
- Did I** tell lies? Deliberately in order to receive or injure others? (slander or calumny)
- Did I** commit perjury?
- Did I** vote in accordance with a properly informed conscience, in a way consistent with the teachings of the Church, in regard to the sanctity of marriage and of human life issues?
- Was I** uncharitable in thought, word or deed?
- Did I** gossip or reveal the faults or sins of others? (detraction)
- Did I** fail to keep secrets that I should have kept?
- Did I** eat meat knowingly on the Fridays during Lent or on Ash Wednesday? (Ages 14+)
- Did I** fast as required on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday? (Ages 18-59)
- Did I** fail to receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season?
- Did I** fail to confess my sins at least once a year?
- Did I** receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?