

How to make a good confession:

Examine your conscience

QUESTIONS BASED ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. You shall have no false gods before me.

- Is God the most important reality in my life?
- Did I entertain doubts about my Catholic faith?
- Did I read books or watch shows/movies against my Catholic faith?
- Am I superstitious? Do I believe in fortune-telling, astrology, palm-reading, witchcraft?
- Have I always trusted in the Lord, especially in the midst of adversities and trials?
- Are there any “minor gods” in my life: money, pleasures, success, popularity, power?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Did I use the name of God disrespectfully?
- Did I curse?
- Did I keep the promises I made to God?
- Did I speak disrespectfully of Jesus, Mary and the other Saints?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.

- Did I participate devoutly and punctually in the Sunday Mass?
- Did I pray regularly every day, at least in the morning and the evening?
- Did I read some passage from Sacred Scripture every day?
- How interested am I in knowing my faith better and helping others (including my friends, officemates/classmates and relatives) do so?

4. Honor your father and mother (for children).

- Did I fail to show love to my parents and other relatives?
- Was I disrespectful or disobedient to them?
- Did I help them when I could?
- Did I disappoint them? How?
- Did I respect my teachers, my parish priest and other persons in authority?
- Did I respect the rules of my school?

(For parents)

- Did I raise my children with selfless love and real concern?
- Was I too hard or too lenient with them?
- Did I give them bad example in the way I spoke or acted?
- Did I fail to lead them with my good example?
- Did I see to it that my children get the proper religious instruction and are actively involved in our Christian community and organizations?
- Did I motivate them for a committed life in the church and society?

5. You shall not kill.

- Did I hurt anybody with my words or actions?
- Did I refuse to help people in need when I had the opportunity and the means to do so?
- Did I spread negative rumors about others?
- Did I give bad examples?
- Did I do my best to make up for it?
- Did I keep grudges?

- Did I apologize promptly and sincerely?
- Was I instrumental in leading others to sin through my words or actions?
- Was I respectful of other people's opinions and beliefs?
- Did I take anybody's life?
- Did I cause any physical injury or moral loss to others?
- Did I do my best to make up for it?
- Did I enroll in any violent organization?
- Did I approve or consent to, recommend, seek or actively take part in abortion?
- Did I contribute to the pollution of the environment?
- Did I take care of my physical and mental health?
- Did I smoke, drink immoderately, use harmful drugs, or do anything that harms my health or the health of others?

6. **You shall not commit impure actions &**
7. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.**

(For All)

- Did I look at immodest pictures, shows, films...or read books and other publications that arouse in me sexual fantasies and may lead me to sin against chastity?
- Did I entertain immodest thoughts or consent to impure desires?
- Did I commit any impure actions by myself or with others?
- Was I prudent and reserved in dealing with people of the opposite sex, whether married or not?
- Did I engage in conversations or jokes that could lead myself and other to commit sins against purity?

(For married people)

- Was I faithful to my wife/husband, both in my thoughts and behavior?
- Did I take pills or use artificial means to avoid pregnancy?
- Did I encourage others to do so?
- Did I use marriage to express my selfless love for my wife/husband, or just to satisfy my sexual urges?

8. You shall not steal &

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's property.

- Was I respectful of other people's property?
- Did I damage public property?
- Did I steal anything?
- Did I return what I stole, or offer adequate compensation?
- Did I cheat in school or in business? Was I honest in my work, performing my duty in the best possible way?
- Was I fair in paying my employees, my taxes and other dues?
- Was I envious of other people's material means, or success?
- Did I waste time and opportunities?
- Was I greedy?
- Did I use natural resources selfishly?

10. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Did I tell lies to defend my pride or to cause damage to others?
- Did I give false witness in court?
- Did I reveal secrets which had been confided to me?
- Did I reveal secret faults of others?

- Did I accuse someone falsely?
- Did I judge others rashly?
- Am I a biased person?
- Am I able to balance truth and charity?

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE CONFESSION

- Humbly and sincerely ask the Lord’s forgiveness and the grace you need to avoid sin in the future;
- Try to identify the internal root causes of your sins: wrong inclinations, personal weaknesses, bad habits...and see what you can do to eliminate at least one of these “root causes.” This means: resolve to work seriously at becoming a better person by either getting rid of one serious moral defect, or by strengthening one good moral quality (virtue);
- Ask the Lord for the grace to make a sincere and thorough confession.

DURING CONFESSION

Make the sign of the cross and say:

- *Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.*

Allow the priest to give you his blessing and to add whatever exhortation he may be inspired to offer. Listen prayerfully and with an open heart, then say:

- *My last good confession was...ago. Since then, I have committed the following sins:...*

Confess your sins clearly and sincerely, starting with the most difficult or embarrassing ones.

Should you feel nervous, or uncertain about some sins, ask the priest to help you.

Remember that it is necessary to specify the number of mortal sins, together with the circumstances that add to their gravity.

When you have finished confessing all the sins that you remember, say:

- *For these sins all the sins of my past life, especially the sins against... (mention the most important virtues, like charity, honesty, purity, etc.) I ask absolution and penance from you, Father.*

The confessor will give you some pertinent advice. He will also give you an appropriate penance to be performed after the sacrament of confession. At his invitation, recite an Act of Contrition.

You can say the **Act of Contrition** either in your own words, or by reciting the following or a similar one:

*O my God, I am heartily sorry
for having offended you.
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,
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, to do penance,
and to amend my life. Amen.*

After having recited the Act of Contrition, bow your head and receive the priest's absolution with humility and gratitude. Follow his words attentively and join him in saying the closing "Amen!"

AFTER CONFESSION

Kneel down in front of the altar or of an image of Our Lord, and thank him for the gift of this confession. Renew your resolution and ask His help to overcome future temptations. With St. Dominic Savio repeat the prayer/commitment synthesized in the motto: **Death, rather than sin.**

If the penance given by the confessor consists in some prayers to be recited, say them quietly and devoutly.

Then smile at Jesus with gratitude. Rise joyful and confident for the Lord has been merciful to you. Live for Him every minute of your life, and let everybody see how wonderful it is to serve the Lord.

"CONFESSION: THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL HEALING, JOY GROWTH AND FREEDOM."