

To make a good confession, we need to look at the following steps:

- ❖ **WHAT TO DO BEFORE CONFESSION**
- ❖ **WHAT TO DO DURING CONFESSION**
- ❖ **WHAT TO DO AFTER CONFESSION**

## **WHAT TO DO BEFORE CONFESSION**

### **1. Examination of Conscience - Recall your sins**

Take a few minutes to think about what you have done against God's Commandments. Review your life with the help of some questions (listed below), which are based on the 10 Commandments. Keep in mind that the Church asks you to confess all the mortal sins that you can remember to have committed since your last confession. Deliberately failing to mention a mortal sin is another mortal sin of sacrilege.

**1<sup>st</sup> Commandment: I am the Lord your God you shall not have strange gods before me**  
Did I fail to love God... to pray? Did I omit morning or evening prayers? Have I doubted or denied my Faith? Was I careless in saying my prayers? Did I read books against the Catholic Faith? Do I engage in superstitious practices such as palm-reading, fortune telling..? Did I go to Communion with mortal sin on my soul?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain**  
Did I curse or swear? Did I use God's name in vain: lightly... carelessly... by blasphemy? Do I use profane language?

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment: Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day**  
Have I missed Mass on Sundays or holy days through my own fault? Was I late for Mass or did I leave early without a good reason? Did I allow my children to miss Mass? Was I easily distracted at Mass? Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday? Did I go to Communion during Easter time? Do I go to Confession at least once a year?

### **4<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Honor your father and your mother**

Did I disobey my parents, teachers or others with lawful authority? Have I talked back or failed to help at home? Did I quarrel with my brothers and sisters?  
Have I neglected my children's religious education? Have I failed to take them to Mass... to frequent confession? Have I failed to spend time with my family?

**5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not kill**  
Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Did I get drunk or take illicit drugs? Did I fight, give bad example or scandal to others? Did I hurt or cause someone to be killed? Did I consent to, recommend, advise or actively take part in an abortion?

**6<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not commit adultery**  
Did I consent to impure glances, passionate kissing or sinful touches? Did I willfully look at indecent pictures in magazines, on the internet, on TV or watch immoral movies? Was I immodest in dress or behavior? Did I read impure books or magazines? Did I engage in impure jokes or conversations? Am I guilty of masturbation (impurity with self), fornication (pre-marital sex), adultery (sex with a married person), or artificial birth control (by pills, devices, Withdrawal)? Do I avoid laziness, gluttony, idleness, and the occasions of impurity? Did I permit or encourage a vasectomy or tubal ligation to avoid children? Have I practiced "in vitro" fertilization? Am I married in the Church?

**7<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not steal**  
Did I steal or damage another's property? How much? Did I return it or make equal restitution? Did I waste time at work, in school, at home? Am I stingy? Do I gamble excessively? Did I neglect to pay my debts promptly? Do I live poverty of spirit and detachment? Have I supported my Church regularly?

**8<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor**  
Have I lied, gossiped? Did I talk about another behind his back? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters? Have I told the unknown faults of others without necessity, even though they may be true? Am I sincere? Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential? Am I critical, uncharitable in my talk? Have I tried to make restitution for the bad reputation I have caused?

**9<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife**  
Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I caused them by stares, bad reading, curiosity or impure conversations? Do I neglect to control my imagination? Do I pray at once to banish such bad thoughts and temptations?

**10<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's goods**  
Is my heart greedy? Am I jealous of what another has? Am I envious of another because I don't have it? Am I moody, gloomy? Do I work, study and keep busy to counter idle thoughts? Is my heart set on earthly possessions or on the true treasure?

### **2. Be truly sorry for your sins**

The essential act of penance, on the part of the penitent, is contrition, i.e., a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed with the resolution not to commit it again.

As you recall your sins, you should try to foster a sorrow for them. You are not trying to just put together a list of thoughts, words or actions that you have done wrong. Each sin reflects a lack of love for your Father God. And it is important to be sorry for these lacks of love.

The resolution to avoid committing these sins in the future (amendment) is a sure sign that your sorrow is genuine and authentic. It is not enough to say you are sorry; you should try to struggle to eliminate these sins from your life. God's grace with the intention to rectify your life will give you the strength to resist and overcome temptation in the future.

## WHAT TO DO DURING CONFESSION

In general, you should mention your sins and the number of times you have committed them.

*You begin with the usual introductory greeting and make the sign of the cross:*

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*The priest says:*

**May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow.**

*The priest or you may read or recite from memory a few words from Holy Scripture relating to God's mercy and to repentance, for instance:*

**Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.**

*You then confess your sins. You may begin by saying:*

**Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was** *(state number of weeks, months or years since your last confession).*

**My sins are as follows:** *(state sins)*

*Following your confession of sins, say:* **I am sorry for these and all of my sins**

*The priest gives you appropriate advice and imposes a penance.*

*The priest invites you to make an act of contrition. You may say, for instance:*

**O 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 fully intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.**

*or*

**Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.*

*You answer: Amen.*

*The priest continues, saying:*

**May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness, and reward you with eternal life. Go in peace.**

## WHAT TO DO AFTER CONFESSION

Give thanks to God for the grace of reconciliation you have just received.

You should fulfill the penance given you by the priest as soon as possible. The fulfillment of the penance is one way to make amends for the lack of love that each sin represents.

If you recall some mortal sin you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others. But be sure to confess it in your next Confession.



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# Confession



# Forgiveness

**Guidelines about  
what to do  
before, during and after  
Confession**