

# GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

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*And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*

*- Matthew 16:19*



ST. JOAN OF ARC CATHOLIC CHURCH



### ACT OF CONTRITION

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all of 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 occasions of sin. Amen.*

# GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

## RECOGNIZING SIN AND GROWING IN HOLINESS

As followers of Jesus, we need to examine our lives and recognize our sinful thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions so that we can bring them to God for forgiveness. Such an examination of conscience should be done regularly, always with trust in God's mercy and love and in the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We all sin, but we do not all acknowledge our sins. It takes honesty and courage to reflect upon our refusals of God's grace and our rejections of his law of love. Contemporary society is often blind to the reality of sin and sometimes even presents sinful behaviors or lifestyles as positive goods to be sought and desired.

In his encyclical *Reconciliation and Penance* (1984), Pope John Paul II suggests that the defining sin of modern times is the "loss of the sense of sin" and reminds us of St. John's warning: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8). Sin is the deliberate violation of God's law.

Although sin promises illusory

goods or happiness, it results in harm to the sinner, who is always the primary victim of sin. The Church teaches that there are two kinds of sin: mortal and venial. Mortal sin is a deliberate and free choice of something known to be seriously wrong that destroys our friendship with God and separates us from him (cf. 1 Jn 5:16-17). All of the following three conditions must be met for a sin to be mortal: (1) it must be something serious; (2) it must be done with sufficient knowledge of its gravity; and (3) it must be done with sufficient freedom of the will. Venial sin is a minor offense against God's law that hurts our relationship with God but does not destroy it.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the ordinary way to have our sins forgiven. It is an encounter with the mercy of the living God, who meets us where we are in our weakness and our sins, and it powerfully deepens our psychological and spiritual growth. The source of many graces, it should be celebrated regularly and whenever the need is felt.

Monthly confession is a healthy and effective means of growing closer to God and leading a balanced, Christ-centered lifestyle.

## CONFESSIONS TIMES

*Chapel*

**Monday – Saturday**

8:00AM – 8:25AM

**Monday**

5:30PM - 5:25PM

**Wednesday**

5:30PM - 6:25PM

*Confessions are also  
available by appointment*

our joy, peace of heart, and purity of conscience.

## HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

Pray to the Holy Spirit for self-knowledge and trust in the mercy of God.

Examine your conscience, be



## CONTRITION

We need contrition, or sorrow for our sins, to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and contrition must include a firm purpose to amend our life and avoid the near occasions of sin — that is, the situations, persons, places, and things that lead us to sin. Sorrow for sin is very different from sadness or selfhatred. As we draw closer to God, our sense of sin and sorrow for sin become deeper, just as do

truly sorry for your sins, and resolve to change your life.

### *Prayer before Confession*

*O most merciful God! Prostrate at your feet, I implore your forgiveness. I sincerely desire to leave all my faults and to confess my sins with all sincerity to you and to your priest. I am a sinner, have mercy on me, O Lord. Give me a lively faith and a firm hope in the Passion of my Redeemer. Give me, for your mercy's sake a*

*sorrow for having offended so good a God. Mary, my mother, refuge of sinners, prays for me that I may make a good confession. Amen.*

1. When in the confessional, the Priest will begin with the Sign of the Cross. Welcoming you, the priest will say: "May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy," or similar words taken from Scripture. You answer: "Amen. Then say, ***Bless***



*me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/ months/ years since my last confession. These are my sins..."*

2. Confess all mortal sins committed since your last confession by kind and number. You may also confess any venial sins.

3. At the end of your confession say these or similar words:  
***For these and all the sins of my life I am sorry.***

4. The Priest may ask questions for clarification or give you some counsel on a point from your confession.

5. The Priest will give you a penance.

6. The Penitent makes an act of contrition.

7. The Priest will give you absolution.

8. Listen as the priest absolves you of your sins and enjoy the fact that God has truly freed you from all your sins. If you forget to confess a mortal sin, you are still forgiven, but must mention it the next time you go to confession.

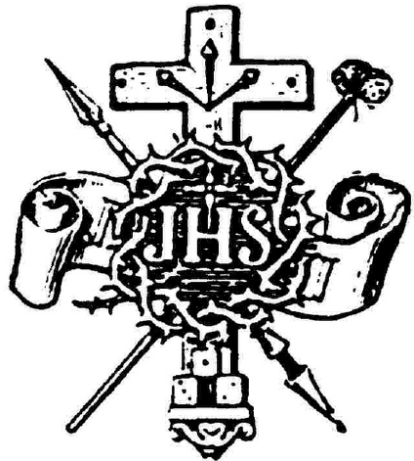
9. Do the penance the priest assigns you.

***If you are anxious or unsure of what to do, take this guide with you or tell the priest and he will make it easier for you.***

## AN AID TO YOUR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

### 1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.

- Do I seek to love God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength (Dt 6:5)? Do I put anything or anyone above God? Do I pray daily?
- Have I received Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?
- Have I abused the Sacrament of Penance by lying to the priest or deliberately not confessing a mortal sin?
- Have I denied a truth of the faith out of concern for the respect or opinion of others?
- Involvement in occult practices, e.g., witchcraft, ouija boards, seances, palm reading, tarot cards, hypnotism, divination, astrology, black magic, fortune telling, sorcery, new age crystals etc.
- Involvement in or adherence to New Age or Eastern philosophies, atheism or agnosticism
- Apostasy (leaving the Church)
- Adherence to a schismatic group
- Putting faith in superstition, e.g., horoscopes, good luck charms, etc.
- Joining the Masons or other secret society
- Receiving Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin
- Receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation or Matrimony while in the state of mortal sin
- Willful participation in illicit (non-emergency) “General Absolution” services
- Being married by a Justice of the Peace or by a minister of another denomination (without dispensation)
- Involvement in false or pagan worship
- Willfully denying the Faith of the Catholic Church



- Despair of God's grace or mercy
- Presumption (committing a mortal sin with the idea that you can just go to confession)
- Hatred of God
- Simony (buying or selling spiritual things)
- Failure to receive Holy Communion at least once per year ( if possible, during the Easter Season)
- Desecration of the Holy Eucharist
- Did I deny or doubt God's existence?
- Did I refuse to believe God's revelation
- Did I deny I was a Catholic?
- Did I abandon the Catholic Faith?
- Did I despair of or presume on God's mercy

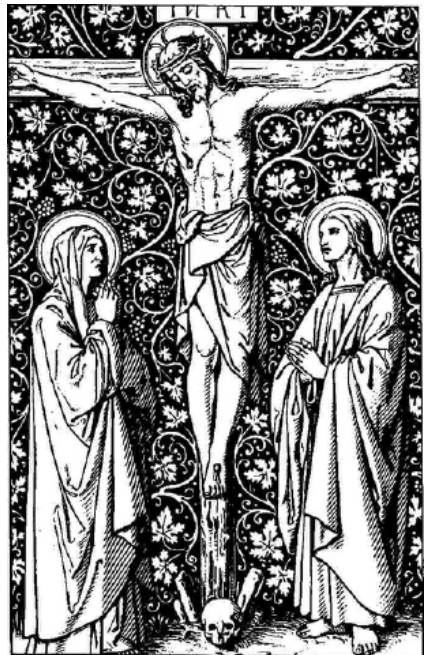
**2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN.**

- Have I used God's holy name irreverently?
- Have I blasphemed God, the Church, Mary, the saints, or sacred places or things?
- Using God's name intentionally as a curse
- Seriously wishing evil upon another
- Serious slander or insult of a

- sacred person or object
- Making an oath in a secret society
- Telling a lie or withholding a serious sin in confession
- Blasphemy (words of hatred, reproach or defiance toward God; speaking ill of God)
- Perjury (lying under oath)
- Swearing false oaths

**3. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY.**

- Do I try to keep Sunday as



a day of prayer, rest, and relaxation, avoiding unnecessary work?

- Have I deliberately come late or left early from Mass without a good reason?
- Missing Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation without a serious reason
- Intentional failure to fast or abstain on appointed days
- Requiring employees to work on Sunday in non-essential occupations
- Did I neglect prayer for a long time?
- Did I fail to pray daily?
- Am I always reverent in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament?
- Was I inattentive at Mass?
- Did I arrive at Mass late?
- Did I leave Mass early?
- Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday?
- Have I failed to educate myself concerning the teachings of the Church?

#### **4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.**

- Do I honor and respect my parents?
- Have I deliberately hurt my parents?
- Do I treat my children with love

and respect?

- Do I support and care for the well-being of all family members?
- Have I neglected family duties?
- Do I honor and obey my lawful superiors?
- Serious failure to care for aged parents
- Serious neglect of the duties of one's state in life
- Serious disrespect for or disobedience to parents, superiors or authorities
- Wishing death or evil on parents
- Abuse or serious neglect of children
- Failure to baptize children in a reasonable time (within a few months) after birth
- Serious neglect of the religious education or upbringing of children
- Failure to carry out the last will of deceased parents
- Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children, or parents?

#### **5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL.**

- Have I deliberately harmed anyone?
- Have I had an abortion or encouraged an abortion?
- Have I attempted suicide or





seriously considered it?

- Have I abused drugs or alcohol?
- Have I led anyone to sin through bad example or through direct encouragement?
- Murder, homicide or manslaughter
- Have I had or advised anyone to have an abortion?
- Promoting, counseling or paying for an abortion
- Knowingly voting for someone who is pro-abortion
- Willfully injuring or trying to hurt another person
- Willfully leading another into serious sin
- Driving dangerously or recklessly
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Willfully harboring hatred for another
- Taking or selling illegal drugs
- Willful drunkenness
- Self mutilation
- Excessive tattoos
- Excessive body piercing
- Sterilization
- Promotion of or involvement in

euthanasia

- Serious entertainment of suicidal thoughts
- Attempting or intending suicide
- Willful failure to bury the body or ashes of the dead
- Willful engagement in unjust lawsuits
- Bigotry (hatred for persons of other races)
- Intentionally placing temptation before the weak

## **6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.**

### ***For the married***

- Am I faithful to my spouse in thought and action?
- Have I used artificial contraception, or been sterilized?
- Was I married outside the Church without proper permission of the Church?

### ***For the unmarried***

- Have I engaged in sexual activity with anyone of either sex?

### ***For all***

- Have I deliberately viewed pornographic magazines, videos

or internet websites?

- Have I masturbated?
- Have I used impure language or told impure jokes?
- Do I dress modestly?

## 7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

- Have I stolen or accepted stolen goods?
- Have I deliberately destroyed the property of others?
- Have I cheated anyone of what I owe?
- Do I gamble excessively?
- Do I share what I have with the poor and the Church according to my means?
- Have I pirated materials: videos, music, software?
- Stealing a large amount of money or a valuable item
- Willfully destroying or defacing another's property
- Stealing something consecrated to God or from a holy place
- Buying, selling, receiving or concealing items known to be stolen
- Willful failure to make restitution
- Excessive gambling
- Defrauding workers of their wages
- Serious failure to fulfill work requirements
- Padding expense or per diem

accounts

- Taking advantage of the poor, simple, inexperienced or less fortunate
- Denying help to the poor, needy or destitute when able to help them easily
- Defrauding creditors
- Bribery or taking bribes
- Blackmail
- Fraud or embezzlement
- Price fixing
- Tax evasion
- Forgery
- Excessive waste or expense
- Violating copyrights
- Slavery
- Serious cruelty to animals
- Did I give a full day's work in return for a full day's pay?

## 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I lied? Have I sworn falsely?
- Have I plagiarized or been academically dishonest?
- Have I gossiped? Have I revealed secrets or confidential information without good reason?
- Have I ruined the good name of others by spreading lies or maliciously revealing their faults and sins?
- False witness (not under oath)



or perjury (under oath)

- Telling large or premeditated lies
- Detraction (revealing the faults of another without serious reason), or calumny (harming the reputation of another by falsities)
- Violation of a confidence without good reason
- Being an accomplice to another's grave sin
- Did I give a bad example, abuse drugs, drink alcohol to excess, fight or quarrel?

### **9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.**

- Have I deliberately and consciously permitted sexual thoughts about anyone besides

my spouse?

- Do I guard my imagination and senses?
- Have I watched shows, plays, pictures or movies that contain impure scenes with the deliberate intention of being aroused by them? Am I responsible about what I read?
- Viewing pornography in books magazines, movies, the internet, etc.
- Reading sexually explicit materials
- Dwelling on impure thoughts or fantasies for the purpose of arousal
- Willfully lusting after another

### **10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.**

- Am I envious of the possessions, abilities, talents, beauty, or success of others?
- Serious and willful greed or avarice
- Intention to steal or destroy the goods of another

### **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

- Do I love my neighbor? Is there anyone whom I do not love or



refuse to love? Have I wished harm or misfortune on anyone?

- Do I forgive from my heart those who have hurt me? Do I harbor hatred or grudges? Do I pray for my enemies?

- Have I ridiculed or humiliated others?

- Do I seek to help others in need?

- Do I love myself as God loves me?

- Do I care for my physical, emotional, and spiritual health?

- Do I forgive myself for my sins after bringing them to God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?



Do I fast for one hour before Holy Communion (water and medicine allowed)?

- Do I contribute to support the material needs of the Church?

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## Precepts of the Church

- Have I deliberately missed Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of obligation without a serious reason?

- Do I go to confession at least once a year when I have serious sins to confess?

- Do I receive Holy Communion, at least once during Eastertime?

- Do I take part in the major feasts celebrating Our Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints?

- Do I abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent (for ages 14 and over) and fast on one full meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (for ages 18-59)?

## GOD

There is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is one Person: a Divine Person. He has two natures. A Divine Nature and a Human Nature.

## THE MAIN EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Birth in Bethlehem, Presentation in the Temple, Baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, Temptations in the desert at the beginning of His public ministry, Sermon on the Mount,

Transfiguration, Last Supper, Carrying of the Cross to Calvary, Death on the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven.

**TITLES OF THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

The New Eve, Mother of God, Mother of the Church, Our Lady, Most Holy Virgin, Queen, Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Mystical Rose, and Mediatrix

**THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS**

Baptism, Confession, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

**WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?**

A Sacrament is an outward, visible sign instituted by Jesus Christ that gives the grace it signifies.

**THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES**

Faith, Hope, and Charity

**THE CARDINAL VIRTUES**

Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude.

**THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Piety, Fortitude, and Fear of the Lord.

**THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Joy, Long-Suffering, Charity, Humility, Peace, Fidelity, Patience, Modesty, Kindness, Contenance, Goodness, and Chastity.

**THE BEATITUDES**

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.
3. Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill
5. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY**

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To harbour the harborless;
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom the captive;
- To bury the dead.



## THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offences willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

## THREE EMINENT GOOD WORKS

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving

## THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS AND THEIR OPPOSITE VIRTUES

1. Pride - Humility
2. Avarice - Generosity
3. Lust - Chastity
4. Anger - Meekness
5. Gluttony - Temperance
6. Envy - Brotherly Love
7. Sloth - Diligence

## GENERAL SINS AGAINST THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

1. Presumption of God's Mercy
2. Despair
3. Resisting and/or Attacking the known truth
4. Envy at another's spiritual good
5. Obstinancy in sin
6. Final impenitence

## SINS CRYING TO HEAVEN FOR VENGEANCE

1. Willful murder
2. Sodomy
3. Oppression of the poor
4. Defrauding laborers of their wages
- 5.

## NINE WAYS OF BEING AN ACCESSORY TO ANOTHER'S SIN

1. By counsel
2. By command
3. By consent
4. By provocation
5. By praise or flattery
6. By concealment
7. By partaking
8. By silence
9. By defense of the sinful action

## THE FOUR LAST THINGS

Death, Judgement, Heaven, or Hell

