

Preparation for Confession

What is the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation)?

Penance is a Sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. It is a Sacrament of healing from our wounds of sins. It also should help you receive the knowledge on how to avoid all sin. This Sacrament was instituted by Christ to His Apostles to be passed on to each generation (John 20:21) (Matthew 16:18) through the ministerial priesthood.

Prayer before Confession

O Holy Spirit, source of all light, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before Christ's judgment seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my sins, and the grace of a sincere confession, so that I may be forgiven and brought into your everlasting friendship. Mary, my Mother, pray for me to make a good confession. (Hail Mary, 3 times)

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The Ten Commandments

1) I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange Gods before me.

The first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, belief in fortune tellers or astrology. We sin against the first commandment by putting anyone or anything in God's place, such as sports, TV, humans, food, material goods, Internet, radio, sex, alcohol, drugs. By failing to show respect for persons, places and things related especially to God, by atheism, heresy and schism, and by missing Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. This, too, involves neglecting to learn the truths about God, leaving God's Catholic Church, (when we have believed it is completely faithful in teaching God's truths to show all men God's salvation). We show great honor to God's name by invoking Him with reverence in our prayers and worship.

2) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

The second commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust and unnecessary oaths, blasphemy, cursing and profane words (e.g. cussing, damning God's holy name).

3) Remember, thou keep holy the Sabbath.

The third commandment obliges us to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, forbids all unnecessary servile work on Sunday. By resting from our usual work, we find it easier to join with family members and other Christians in making Sunday a day of celebration.

4) Honor thy Father and Mother.

The fourth commandment forbids all disobedience, contempt and stubbornness towards our parents or lawful superiors, (e.g. talking back to parents and teachers, being disobedient to all authority unless sin is involved). We show our love for our neighbor when we obey all lawful authority whether it be at home, in civil society, or in the church. Even authority of civil government comes from God. St. Paul wrote: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God. And those that are, are ordained by God. (Romans 13: 1-2).

5) Thou shalt not kill.

The fifth commandment forbids all willful murder, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, bad example, abortion and unlawful birth control. Christ came to give us life, not take it. All followers of Christ should oppose whatever tends to destroy or abuse human life: murder, suicide, abortion, mercy killing, drug abuse, drunkenness, fighting, and anger. "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer." (1 John 3:15)

6) Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7) Thou shalt not steal.

It is sinful to be selfishly apathetic towards others in need, to violate the rights of others, to steal, to deliberately damage others good name or property, to cheat, to not pay one's debt, or to unjustly discriminate another.

8) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The eighth commandment forbids all rash judgment, back-biting, slander, gossip and lies. Exaggerating about another's faults, telling tales about them or damaging a person's reputation is all a sin against the eighth commandment. "To

speak evil of no man, not to be litigious, but gentle: showing all mildness towards all men.) (Titus 3: 1-2)

9) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

The sixth and the ninth commandments forbid unchaste thoughts or desires on another's husband or wife; all impurity and immodesty in words, looks, thoughts, entertainment, actions, the clothes you wear. The use of the sexual faculty is a right and privilege of those validly married. Therefore, adultery, fornication (sex before marriage), masturbation, pornography, indecent entertainment, acts of impurity and a fully deliberate desire to commit these acts is all seriously wrong and a sin against the sixth and ninth commandment. "But I say to you, that whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5: 27-28)

10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors goods.

The tenth commandment forbids all desires to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another. All of the goods of this world come from the good God. He has put more than enough of them at the disposal of men. The material goods that God gives us are not for ourselves alone. He gave them to be shared

with the less fortunate, especially those in desperate need. Other sins against the tenth commandment are - fraud, damaging property of another, not paying debt, not making an effort to find the owner of a material you found, depriving a laborer of just wage, wasting time and money, depriving the family the money needed by wasting it on gambling, drinking and all kinds of foolish needs.

The Seven Capital Sins

Pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth.

What is necessary to make a good Confession?

- A) Examination of Conscience
- B) Confess all sins, even venial sins
- C) Sorrow of sin (not wanting to commit the same sin ever again)
- D) Firm resolution never more to offend God
- E) Confess our sins to a priest. (Tell all of the mortal sins you have committed and how many times that you can remember).
- F) Say the penance which the priest gives us.

Method of Confessing

Enter the Confessional, start with the sign of the Cross, with a moderate low voice -- Say: Bless me Father for I have sinned. I confess to Almighty God, and to you Father. It is (how long) since my last Confession.

Tell all your sins. Listen to the priest, answer all questions. Pay attention to the penance given. While the priest recites Absolution, say your Act of Contrition. "And go and sin no more."

Act of Contrition

O My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because I have offended you who art so good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul.