

Making a good confession



1. Take time to prepare -

Don't just form a shopping list, consider what is weighing heavily on you, what did you fail to do as well as what you may have done. Don't be unnecessarily hard on yourself, if it's been a while then your understanding and self awareness may take a while before you start noticing areas that need to be brought to the Lord. This like everything else is a journey, God sees where you are and He is rejoicing that you've come.

2. Don't be afraid to ask for help -

If it's been years since your last confession - then tell the Priest. Its ok to say I don't remember all the prayers or what to say. He will be happy to guide you through it. Confession is an encounter with God, its not a test to pass, and not saying the perfect responses doesnt make it in any way invalid.

3. Be honest and keep it simple -

There is no need for long explanations, excuses or elaborate stories. Simply name your sins honestly and, as far as possible, clearly. Serious sins should be confessed in kind and number. Resist the temptation to justify yourself or minimise your actions. God already knows your heart; He simply invites you to open it to Him.

4. Come with a willingness to change -

You don't have to feel overwhelmed with guilt or promise that you'll never fail again. But genuine sorrow and a sincere intention to turn away from sin are important. Ask God for the grace to recognise what needs to change and the courage to take the first step.

5. Leave your sins behind -

Listen carefully to the words of absolution and trust in God's forgiveness. Complete your penance and, where possible, take practical steps to put right any harm you have caused. Don't keep returning to sins that God has already forgiven. Accept His mercy, give thanks and allow yourself the freedom of a fresh start.

What to confess



You will find here a gentle examination of Conscience, it's an invitation to look honestly at our life in the light of God's love. if it's been many years don't think you have to try and remember every mistake you've made. Begin where you are and allow God to bring to mind the places He knows you need the most help and healing.

01. My Relationship with God

Have I made room for the One who loves me?

- Have I gradually allowed God to slip out of my daily life?
- Have I neglected prayer, only turning to God when I need something?
- Have I deliberately missed Sunday Mass or Holy Days of Obligation without a serious reason?
- Have I allowed other things — comfort, possessions, work or distractions — to become more important than God?
- Have I struggled to trust God, preferring to rely entirely upon myself?
- Have I used God's name carelessly or disrespectfully?

02. My Relationships with Others

How have I loved the people God has placed in my life?

- Have I been impatient, unkind, dismissive or unnecessarily critical?
- Have I held on to resentment, bitterness or a desire for revenge?
- Have I gossiped, spoken unfairly about others or damaged someone's reputation?
- Have I failed to apologise when I knew I was wrong?
- Have I been dishonest, manipulative or deliberately hurtful?
- Have I ignored someone who needed my kindness, attention or help?

03. My Family and Home

Do those closest to me experience my love?

- Have I taken my family or those who care for me for granted?
- Have I been quicker to criticise than to encourage?
- Have I allowed tiredness, frustration or anger to influence how I treat others?
- Have I been physically present but emotionally unavailable?
- Have I neglected my responsibilities towards my spouse, children, parents or others who depend upon me?
- Have I been willing to forgive, listen and admit when I am wrong?

04. My Inner Life

What has been growing quietly within my heart?

- Have I allowed jealousy, envy, pride or resentment to take root?
 - Have I enjoyed someone else's misfortune or secretly wished them harm?
 - Have I been judgemental, assuming the worst of others?
 - Have I refused to acknowledge my faults, preferring to blame other people?
 - Have I knowingly entertained thoughts or desires that lead me away from God's love?
 - Have I allowed fear, selfishness or the desire for approval to prevent me from doing what is right?
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05. My Choices and Habits

Am I living with freedom, honesty and integrity?

Have I lied, cheated, stolen or knowingly acted dishonestly?

Have I misused alcohol, food, money, technology or other comforts in ways that harm myself or others?

Have I treated my own body or someone else's without the dignity and respect they deserve?

Have I chosen or encouraged sexual behaviour contrary to God's teaching on chastity and fidelity?

Have I acted selfishly, putting my own desires before my responsibilities?

Have I repeatedly chosen what is easy or comfortable when I knew I should do something better?

06. The Good I Have Failed to Do

Love is not only about avoiding wrong, but choosing what is right.

Have I turned away from someone who needed help when I could reasonably have offered it?

Have I remained silent when someone was being treated unjustly?

Have I withheld kindness, generosity or forgiveness?

Have I neglected opportunities to use my gifts and abilities for good?

Have I allowed indifference to prevent me from responding to the suffering of others?

Have I recognised what God was asking of me, but deliberately chosen to ignore it?

A Final Moment of Reflection

As you finish, consider these three questions:

What am I most sorry for?

What do I need God's help to change?

Is there someone I need to forgive, apologise to or make amends with?

You may find it helpful to write down a few words to take into Confession, particularly if you are nervous or worried about forgetting something.

Remember that in Confession we should acknowledge our sins honestly, including the kind and approximate number of any mortal sins we remember.

There is no need to invent details or become anxious about things genuinely forgotten.



How to Go to Confession - Step by Step



01. Begin with the Sign of the Cross

You: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [however long] since my last Confession."

If you're nervous, you can simply say: "It's been a long time, Father, and I'm not sure I remember what to do."

02. Confess Your Sins

You: "These are my sins..."

Tell the priest the sins you have remembered during your examination of conscience. Be honest and straightforward. You don't need to explain every detail or tell a long story. When you have finished, you can say:

You: "For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry."

03. Listen to the Priest

The priest may offer some gentle advice, encouragement or guidance. He will then give you a penance, usually a prayer or a simple action to complete after Confession.

04. Say an Act of Contrition

The priest will invite you to express your sorrow. You can use a familiar prayer or say something simple and sincere, such as:

You: "O my God, I am sorry for my sins because I have offended You, who are all good and deserving of all my love. With Your help, I will try not to sin again. Amen."

05. Receive Absolution

The priest will usually extend his hand before praying the words of absolution, including: "And I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

You: "Amen."

These are the most important words of the Sacrament. Through them, Christ grants you His forgiveness.

06. Go in Peace Priest: "Go in peace."

You: "Thanks be to God."

After leaving, take a moment to thank God for His mercy and complete the penance you were given. Remember... You don't have to get every word right. You don't need to be eloquent, and you certainly don't need to be perfect. The priest will guide you. God is not waiting for a perfect performance — He is waiting to welcome you home.



Prayer for a Good Confession

Loving Father,

You know me completely — my strengths and weaknesses, my mistakes and regrets, the things I am ashamed of and the things I struggle to change.

Nothing I bring before You is a surprise, and nothing is beyond Your mercy.

Give me the courage to be honest, the humility to be sorry and the willingness to begin again.

Help me to trust not in my own goodness, but in the greatness of Your love.

Father, I am ready to come home.

Amen.

Scripture to Reflect Upon

The Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15

Peter and Jesus on the Beach – John 21

The Woman Caught in Adultery John 8: 1-11

The Healing of the Paralysed Man– Mark 2: 1-12

The Sinful Woman anoints Jesus – Luke 7:36-50

Zacchaeus – Luke 19: 1-10

The washing of the disciples feet – John 13: 1-11

Create in me a clean heart – Psalm 51



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