

Before Confession:

Reflect that this confession may be the last of your life. Therefore, prepare yourself for it as if you were lying sick upon your deathbed and already at the brink of the grave. Ask God to give you the grace to make a good examination of conscience, the light to see your sins clearly, and the strength to make a sincere confession and to amend your life.

Examination of Conscience

Begin by examining yourself on your last confession: Whether a mortal sin was forgotten through want of proper examination, or concealed or disguised through shame. Whether you confessed without a true sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment. Whether you have repaired all evil done to your neighbor. Whether the penance was performed without voluntary distractions. Whether you have neglected your confessor's counsel, and fallen at once into habitual sins.

Then examine yourself on the Ten Commandments; the Commandments of the Church; the seven capital sins; the duties of your state of life and your ruling passion. Calmly recall the different occasions of sin which have fallen in your way, or to which your state and condition in life expose you; the places you have frequented. The persons with whom you have associated. Do not neglect to consider the circumstances which after the grievousness of the sin, nor the various way sin which we become the accessory to the sins of others.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The Six Commandments of the Church

1. To Hear/Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed
3. To go to confession at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion once a year at least during Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. To obey the Church in regards to the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The Seven Deadly Sins and the Opposite Virtues

1. Pride.....Humility
2. Covetousness.....Liberality
3. Lust.....Chastity
4. Anger.....Meekness
5. Gluttony.....Temperance
6. Envy.....Brotherly love
7. Sloth.....Diligence

The Four Sins Which Cry to Heaven for vengeance:

1. Willful murder. 2. The Sin of Sodom/Homosexual Acts. 3. Oppression of the poor. 4. Defrauding the labor of your wages.

Nine Ways of Being 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 ill done.

The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To admonish sinners. 2. To instruct the ignorant. 3. To counsel the doubtful. 4. To comfort the sorrowful. 5. To bear wrongs patiently. 6. To forgive all injuries. 7. To pray for the living and the dead.

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy

1. To feed the hungry. 2. To give drink to the thirsty. 3. To clothe the naked. 4. To visit and ransom the captives. 5. To harbor the harbor less. 6. To visit the sick. 7. To bury the dead.

Preliminary Examination of Conscience

When did you make your last confession? Did you take sufficient pains to awaken contrition? Did you omit to confess a mortal sin either intentionally or through forgetfulness? Did you intentionally neglect to say the penance which was imposed on you, or were you so careless as to forget it? Have you carried out the resolutions you made at your last confession or have you paid no heed at all to them?

Make your examination of conscience.

After the Examination

Having discovered the sins of which you have been guilty, together with their number, enormity, or such circumstances as may change their nature, you should endeavor to excite in yourself a heartfelt sorrow for having committed them, and a sincere detestation of them. This being the most essential of all the dispositions requisite for a good confession, with what humility, fervor and perseverance should you not importune him Who holds the hearts of men in His hands to grant it to you!

Upon entering the confessional when you kneel down say:

Bless me father for I have sinned. [Now tell the priest how long it has been since your last confession and begin to tell the priest your sins with a contrite and humble heart. After you have told your sins end with the following]: For these and all the sins of my past life, especially my sins of [name some grievous sin] I am heartily sorry, beg pardon of God, and absolution of you, Father.

Listen then, with humility to the instruction of the priest. During this time avoid all recurrence to the confession itself; remembering that sins forgotten after a serious examination are really compromised in the absolution.

Accept with submission the penance imposed, and if there is any obstacle that you foresee that will prevent your accomplishing it, state this respectfully.

During Absolution say a perfect act of contrition. (Below)

Eternal Father! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they displease Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.

After absolution thank the priest and leave the confessional. Make your way to a pew and say the prayers required for your penance.