

St. Thomas Korean Catholic Center

Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation



FIVE STEPS TO A GOOD CONFESSION

1. Examine your conscience - what sins have you committed since your last good confession.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess ALL your sins to the priest. Be specific, but not detailed. Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of times committed.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After your confession, do the penance the priest gives to you.



WHAT TO DO DURING CONFESSION

- After the priest greets you, make the sign of the cross. Start by saying: *"Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession. These are my sins."*
- Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. Be specific, but not over detailed. Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of times committed.
- When finished telling your sins, you should say: *"For these and other sins which I cannot remember, I ask for forgiveness."*
- Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then make an Act of Contrition for your sins.
- After the absolution the priest will conclude with: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."
- Please go to the **CHURCH** to do your penance and also worship in Eucharistic Adoration.

PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION

Receive my confession, O most loving and gracious Lord Jesus Christ, only hope for the salvation of my soul. Grant to me true contrition of my soul, so that day and night I may by penance make satisfaction for my many sins. Savior of the world, O good Jesus, Who gave Yourself to the death of the Cross to save sinners, look upon me, most wretched of all sinners; have pity on me, and give me the light to know my sins, true sorrow for them, and a firm purpose of never committing them again. O gracious Virgin Mary, Immaculate Mother of Jesus, I implore you to obtain for me by your powerful intercession these graces from your Divine Son. St. Joseph, pray for us.

THE DIFFERENCE IN SINS

There are two major kinds of sin: original and actual. Actual sin is sin which people commit.

There are two kinds of actual sin, MORTAL and VENIAL.

VENIAL SIN: Venial sin weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of the virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. However venial sin does not break the covenant with God. With God's grace it is humanly reparable. *"Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently eternal happiness."* (CCC #1863)

MORTAL SIN: destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. (CCC #1855). Mortal sin is a horrible offense against God, so horrible that it destroys the life of grace in the soul. Three conditions must be fulfilled for a mortal sin.

1. The act must be something very serious.
2. The person must have sufficient understanding of what is being done (full understanding).
3. The person must have sufficient freedom of the will (complete consent).

So I cannot commit a mortal sin if the matter is not serious, or if I did not know what I was doing (e.g., if I were to hurt someone accidentally or unthinkingly), or if I did not act with full freedom. A Catholic should know well the difference between mortal and venial sins.

ACT OF CONTRITION

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 firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other Gods besides me.

Did I fail to love God, to make God first in my life, to thank Him, trust Him, love Him as He deserves? Did I fail to pray? Have I doubted or denied my faith? Was I careless in saying my prayers? Do I give God time everyday in prayer? Do I make a god out of my school, work, my possessions, or my image in the eyes of others so that these rule my life instead of God? Have I received Eucharist in the state of mortal sin? Am I angry toward God because of illness or misfortune? Have I been involved with magic, horoscopes, Ouija boards, or fortune telling?

2. 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? Have I used foul language or jokes? In conversation, have I passively listened to slander and to jokes demeaning to the Church, or God's authority?

3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Did I leave Mass early without a good reason? Did I come late to mass consistently because my own fault? Have I been to Communion at least once a year? Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of serious sin? Have I been to confession recently? Have I allowed myself to become so dominated by my work, school and chores that I have not set aside Sunday for spiritual and family activities?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

Did I honor and obey my parents? Did I respect my brothers and sisters? Did I respect others with lawful authority, especially teachers? Have I talked back? Did I fail to help at home or to spend time with my family? Do I blame my parents for my own shortcomings? Do I care for my aged relatives? Do I respect my elders?

5. You shall not kill.

Did I give in to feelings of anger or jealousy? Did I keep hatred in my heart? Have I ever struck anyone in anger, intending to injure the person? Did I fight; give a bad example or cause scandal? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Have I had or in any way permitted or encouraged abortion? Have I thought about suicide? Have I killed someone? Have I killed someone with gossip or by what I said? Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone to have an abortion? Have I physically harmed anyone? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Did I lead someone else into sin? Have I been angry or resentful? Have I harbored hatred in my heart? Have I been sterilized for reasons of birth control? Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

Did I consent to impure glances? Passionate kisses? Sinful touches? Did I give my mind over to lustful thoughts or fantasies? Was I immodest in dress or behavior? Did I look at pornography, impure books, magazines or videos? Am I guilty of impurity with myself or with others? Do I avoid laziness, gluttony, idleness and the occasions of impurity? Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action? Have I engaged in any sexual activity before marriage or outside of marriage? Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control? Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects? Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity?

7. You shall not steal.

Have I stolen what is not mine? What or how much? Did I return it or make up for what I have stolen? Have I cheated on tests or homework? Did I waste time at work? Have I been extravagant in my manner of life, to the neglect of the poor at home and abroad? Do I gamble excessively? Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

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

Have I lied or gossiped? Talked about another person behind their back? Do I always tell the truth? Am I sincere? Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential? In any of my previous confessions, did I lie to or deliberately conceal something from the priest? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my talk? Have I injured the reputation of others by speaking about their failures and sins with little desire or intention to help them? Have I condoned prejudice and hatred toward people of other nationalities, races or religions?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I encouraged them by stares, curiosity or impure conversations? Did I neglect to control my imagination or desire of other people? Have I rejected my family in my heart, wishing to distance myself emotionally and personally from them?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Is my heart greedy? Am I jealous of what another has? Am I envious of others because I don't have what they have? Do I habitually compare myself with others? Am I moody or gloomy? Do I work, study and keep busy to counter idle thoughts? Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Is my heart set on earthly possessions or on the treasures in heaven?