

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Before you go to confession examine your conscience, i.e. reflect on what sins you have committed. It's okay to make a list to bring with you to confession if that helps you to remember.

CONFESSION

INTRODUCTION:

Begin by saying:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been (how long) since my last confession. I accuse myself of...

CONFESSION OF SINS:

List the sins you have committed that came to mind when doing your examination of conscience.

Tips:

- Be brief, concise, and frank about your sins. Don't "beat around the bush."
- Just tell the priest what you have done, don't try to qualify it. There is virtue in just saying your sins, not trying to justify them.
- Don't be too general (e.g., "I haven't been a good person"), but a lot of detail is not necessary either (you don't need to tell the whole story of how a sin came about).
- If you're not sure if something is a sin, just ask the priest.
- The priest may give you some advice, but this isn't counseling. If you want more advice make an appointment next time, or seek out a spiritual director.

PENANCE

The priest will assign something for you to do or pray as a response to God's mercy. You'll have to remember what this is and do it after the confession is over.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, 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 offend Thee, my God, Who are 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 amend my life. Amen.

or

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all 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.

or

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.

ABSOLUTION

The priest will extend his hands in your direction and he will pray the Prayer of Absolution. When he finishes you respond "Amen."

CONCLUSION

The priest may then say something like, "God has freed you from your sins. Go in Peace." To which you respond: "Thanks be to God."

AFTER YOU LEAVE...

Don't forget to do your penance. If it is saying certain prayers, it's best to do it right away in the church before you forget.

Has no one condemned you?... Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.