

Examination of Conscience

Before going to Confession you should make a review of mortal and venial sins since your last sacramental confession, and should express sorrow for sins, hatred for sins and a firm resolution not to sin again. A helpful pattern for examination of conscience is to review the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church:

1. Have God and the pursuit of sanctity in Christ been the goal of my life? Have I denied my faith? Have I placed my trust in false teachings or substitutes for God? Did I despair of God's mercy?
2. Have I avoided the profane use of God's name in my speech? Have I broken a solemn vow or promise?
3. Have I honored every Sunday by avoiding unnecessary work, celebrating the Mass (also holydays)? Was I inattentive at, or unnecessarily late for Mass, or did I leave early? Have I neglected prayer for a long time?
4. Have I shown Christ like respect to parents, spouse, and family members, legitimate authorities? Have I been attentive to the religious education and formation of my children?
5. Have I cared for the bodily health and safety of myself and all others? Did I abuse drugs or alcohol? Have I supported in any way abortion, "mercy killing," or suicide?
6. Was I impatient, angry, envious, proud, jealous, revengeful, lazy? Have I forgiven others?
7. Have I been just in my responsibilities to employer and employees? Have I discriminated against others because of race or other reasons?
8. Have I been chaste in thought and word? Have I used sex only within marriage and while open to procreating life? Have I given myself sexual gratification? Did I deliberately look at impure TV, pictures, reading?
9. Have I stolen anything from another, from my employer, from government? If so, am I ready to repay it? Did I fulfill my contracts? Did I rashly gamble, depriving my family of necessities?
10. Have I spoken ill of any other person? Have I always told the truth? Have I kept secrets and confidences?
11. Have I permitted sexual thoughts about someone to whom I am not married?
12. Have I desired what belongs to other people? Have I wished ill on another?
13. Have I been faithful to sacramental living (Holy Communion and Penance)?
14. Have I helped make my parish community stronger and holier? Have I contributed to the support of the Church?
15. Have I done penance by abstaining and fasting on obligatory days? Have I fasted before receiving communion?
16. Have I been mindful of the poor? Do I accept God's will for me?

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 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 you Divine Son.

St. Joseph, pray for me

After examining your conscience and telling God of your sorrow, go into the confessional. You may kneel at the screen or sit to talk face-to-face with the priest. Begin your confession with the sign of the cross:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. My last confession was _____ weeks (months, years) ago and these are my sins:"

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because I have offended you, my God, who are all 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.

After Confession

O almighty and most merciful God, I give You thanks with all the powers of my soul for this and all other mercies, graces, and blessings bestowed on me, and prostrating myself at Your sacred feet, I offer myself to be henceforth forever Yours. Let nothing in life or death ever separate me from You! I renounce with my whole soul all my treasons against You, and all the abominations and sins of my past life. I renew my promises made in Baptism, and from this moment I dedicate myself eternally to Your love and service. Grant that for the time to come, I may detest sin more than death itself, and avoid all such occasions and companies as have unhappily brought me to it. This I resolve to do by the aid of Your divine grace, without which I can do nothing. Amen.