

How to Go to Confession

There is no need to use the exact words below, they are here as a help and a suggestion. If you are unsure what to say or what to do, please ask the priest for help. The Priest is there to help you through this celebration to grow in your love for God. Many 'Confessional Boxes' offer an option of sitting behind a screen or in front of the priest. You may choose whatever you prefer.

After a thorough examination of conscience, the Penitent approaches the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You must have both true contrition (be truly sorry), and a firm resolve to amend one's life.

The Penitent begins:

"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. These are my sins..."

Tell the priest your sins. A good confession means confessing all the sins you remember, since your last confession, including the number of times any mortal sins were committed.

After confessing all your sins, say:

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

The priest may discuss your confession with you and then gives you a penance to be said later and asks you to say an Act of Contrition, using a formal prayer, or your own words.

After you have said an Act of Contrition the priest then gives you Absolution, forgiving all your sins.

The priest may finish by saying 'Go in peace' or something similar.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation & Examination of Conscience



In the Sacrament of Reconciliation you will experience the Lord's forgiveness and compassion. It is a very personal moment in your relationship with God. To get the most from your confessional-encounter with Christ, you should prepare well. You should arouse in yourself a deep, true sorrow for your sins, how they have offended against God who loves us infinitely, and how they have hurt our neighbours who so need our help.

Please remember that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is above all an act of God's love, it is a personal moment to be lived in a relationship of love with God. It is not a routine (or an ordeal) to be gone through, but very much part of the personal renewal which takes place in each person.

You are invited in the light of God's love

- to recognise the sinfulness in your life.
- to have a true sorrow for these sins.
- and a firm intention to avoid them in the future.

Sin is not merely a series of failures. It is also your sharing in what is actually evil:

- unbelief, indifference, selfishness,
- violence, contempt for the weak, eroticism,
- racism, neglect of the poor,
- money seeking, wastefulness,
- a spirit of pride and superiority.

Every sin, in one way or another; has a community dimension. It is something which tarnishes the Body of Christ, which together, we are.

Today my Father is waiting for me, I must return to Him...

Then the prodigal son came to his senses and said: "I will leave this place and go to my Father and say: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.' While he was still a long way off, his Father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. The Father said: 'Quick, bring out the best robe... this son of mine was dead and has come back to life.' (Luke 15)

Our Heavenly Father awaits us in the same way

Following the example of the prodigal son, examine your conscience in the light of the Gospel and find out when you have behaved contrary to the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ in thoughts, words and deeds.

Jesus said:

'You will love the Lord your God with all your heart...'

- Is my heart set on God, so that I really love him above all things?
- Am I open to his presence?
- Do I listen to the words of the Gospel? To the teachings of Christ's Church?
- What place has prayer in my life?
- Is the Eucharist the centre of my Christian life?
- Do I take part regularly in Mass on Sundays and Feasts?
- Do I allow the Lord to be the Lord, or do I try to be the Lord myself?
- Do I cling to my will, my wants, my ways?
- Have I love and reverence for the name of God?
- Am I ashamed to witness to my faith in God in my daily life?
- Do I rebel against taking up the Cross which God sends?
- Do I turn to God only when I am in need?

Jesus said: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

- Have I a genuine love for my neighbours?
- Am I well-disposed, able to forgive offences?
- Do I judge without mercy in thoughts and words?
- Do I speak ill, slander, steal?
- Am I intolerant, envious, hot-tempered?
- Do I take care of the poor, the sick, the defenceless people?
- Am I sincere and honest in my dealings with others?
- Have I been the cause of another's committing sin?
- In my family life, have I contributed to the well-being and happiness of

the rest of the family by patience and genuine love?

- Do I exercise responsible parenthood according to the teachings of the Church?
- Do I care for and respect the environment in which I live?
- Do I seek the well-being of others?
- Do I think enough about those who are less fortunate?
- Am I a spectator before people's problems, or do I help? Do I despise those of another creed, colour or opinion?
- Am I respectful of other people's property?
- Have I abused someone's property or stolen or coveted another's goods?
- Do I forgive those who sin against me?
- Do I do my duty as a citizen?
- Do I respect legitimate authority?

Jesus said: 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect'

- Do I truly live as a Christian and give a good example to others?
- Have I gone against my conscience out of fear or hypocrisy?
- Have I participated in things which offend both Christian and human decency?
- Am I too concerned about myself, my health, my success?
- Have I kept my senses and my whole body pure and chaste as a temple of the Holy Spirit?
Do I bear grudges; do I contemplate revenge?
Do I share my possessions with the less fortunate?
- Am I always ready to take offence and act impatiently?
- Do I use the gift of time well?
- Am I able to forgive myself?
- Do I seek to be humble and bring peace?

Act of Contrition

(You may use one you already know or one of the following)

O my God, because you are so good,
I am sorry that I have sinned against you,
and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen.

or
I love you Jesus, my love above all things,
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again
Grant that I may always love you
and then do with me what you will. Amen