



If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

(1 John 1:8-10)



Confession is considered by the Church to be like a second Baptism, where, by God's mercy, we are afforded the opportunity to wash away our sins. Baptism initiated us in the Life in Christ, washing all our sins away. Unfortunately, each of us, be we layperson, monastic or clergy, still strays from God's will for us. We make mistakes. We sin. When we recognize our sin and repent, approaching our loving Father with a humble and contrite heart, God will accept us and restore us. Therefore, the truly repentant person recognizes the need for Confession and runs to God to acknowledge before Him his or her sin.



PREPARING FOR HOLY CONFESSION

We should prepare ourselves carefully before confessing our sins. We should ask God to give us the courage and the strength we need to make a thorough examination of our conscience and the grace to change our life. The following questions are meant to help us as we prepare to ask the Lord for forgiveness and healing.



Confession



If we confess our
sins

SELF-EXAMINATION OF OUR CONSCIENCE

First commandment

I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me!

Have I believed in God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Have I failed to trust in God and His mercy? Have I had any serious doubts about God and His divine providence and His salvation through Jesus Christ? Have I failed to pray to God faithfully? Have I loved God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and my neighbor as myself? Have I remembered to put God first in my life as a way of loving Him, or is comfort and pleasure first in my life?

Second commandment

You shall not make for yourself a graven image!

Have I made an idol of any person or thing? Have I read the Holy Scriptures regularly? Have I been irreverent during church services? Have I neglected to receive Holy Communion regularly or without due preparation?

Third commandment

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain!

Have I profaned the holy name of God in any way? Have I cursed anyone or anything, or sworn a false oath? Have I had due respect to the clergy or the Church? Have I given proper reverence to holy persons and things? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise?

Fourth commandment

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy!

Have I neglected to attend church on Sundays or prevented others from doing likewise? Have I done unnecessary work on Sundays? Have I profaned it by my

improper conduct? Have I prayed at home? Have I kept the fasts and feasts prescribed by the church? Have I kept the laws of the church? Have I tried to learn what the church teaches and believes? Have I doubted the teachings of my church to the extent that I have not attended any services nor participated in the Sacraments? Have I wandered outside my church seeking salvation? Have I been a heretic or schismatic? Have I frequented their houses of worship? Have I been involved in any occult activity (magic, witchcraft, astrology), or given myself over to superstition?

Fifth commandment

Honor your father and your mother!

Have I respected my parents and been obedient to them? Have I deceived my parents or caused them pain by my words or actions? Have I respected the elderly? Have I neglected my family? Have I been wanting in love or kindness toward my husband or wife, or harmed him or her in any way? Have I set my children a good example and tried to bring them up properly? Have I neglected my god-parents and failed in any obligations toward them?

Sixth commandment

You shall not kill!

Have I caused injury or death to anyone, or wished someone were dead? Have I fantasized about harming anyone? Have I thought about committing suicide? Have I been cruel to anyone? Have I mistreated animals? Have I failed to forgive anyone for anything? Have I failed to stand up for those unjustly treated? Have I been prejudiced toward any race or nationality?

Seventh commandment

You shall not commit adultery!

Have I given way to impure thoughts, word or deeds? Am I guilty of adulterous acts? Have I committed fornication (sex between unmarried persons), masturbation or homosexual acts? Have I and my future spouse engaged in conjugal relations before

marriage? Have my spouse and I engaged in immoral or unnatural conjugal relations? Do I read immoral literature, magazines, or attend obscene films? Have I been provocative? Do I dress modestly? Do I tell suggestive stories or jokes? Do I encourage lust in others? Am I guilty of drunkenness?

Eighth commandment

You shall not steal!

Have I stolen anything or wished to do so? Have I cheated anyone? Have I been dishonest in financial matters? Have I paid my debts? Have I lived within my income, and not wastefully or extravagantly? Have I neglected my duties to God and to the works of His Church?

Ninth commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor!

Have I told lies? Have I spoken evil of anyone? Have I betrayed anyone by revealing any secrets entrusted to me? Have I gossiped about anyone or harmed their reputation?

Tenth commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house ... or anything that is your neighbor's!

Have I envied anything good that has come to others? Have I damaged or destroyed the property of others? Am I burdened with the desire for riches or possessions? Have I been stingy? Have I hoped for the downfall of anyone so that I might gain by it? Am I truly sorry for my sins? Do I really want to repent (change of mind, heart, and life style) and do all I can to return to God and love Him?

