



Sacrament of Confession for Christmas

Parish of the Holy Eucharist, along with all the parishes around the diocese, will be celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas.

Since many people have not gone to confession in a very long time, we have provided this outline to show you the Order of the Sacrament. It is our hope that it will reduce the anxiety many have for going to Confession and instead feel the immense love Christ offers in this Sacrament. Feel free to tear this page from the bulletin, use the Examination of Conscience provided on the back side to help reflect on what you need to bring to the Sacrament, and take this sheet with you into the confessional. This way you will have the "Act of Contrition" with you and you need not memorize it. There will also be copies of the "Act of Contrition" in the confessional. Our faith says a good confession begins with a good examination of conscience. May this season bring you many blessing through this Sacrament.

Order of Penance

1) Greeting: The priest welcomes the penitent warmly and greets him or her with kindness.

2) Sign of the Cross: Then the penitent makes the Sign of the Cross, which the priest may also make.

The penitent says, "*Father forgive me, it has been _
(length of time) since my last confession. These are
my sins....*"

3) Confession of Sins : The penitent confesses his or her sins.

4) Accepts the Penance from the Priest and says the Act of Contrition:

Act of Contrition

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments;
but most of all because they offend 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.*

5) The priest prays the prayer of Absolution: At the conclusion of the prayer, the penitent responds: "Amen."

Examination of Conscience found in the Rite of Penance, Appendix III

What is my attitude to the sacrament of penance? Do I sincerely want to be set free from sin, to turn again to God, to begin a new life, and to enter into a deeper friendship with God? Or do I look on it as a burden, to be undertaken as seldom as possible? In past confessions, did I forget to mention, or deliberately conceal, any grave sins? Did I perform the penance I was given in my last confession? Did I make reparation for any injury to others? Have I tried to put into practice my resolution to lead a better life in keeping the Gospel?

Questions related to the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart."

Is my heart set on God, so that I really love him above all things and am faithful to his commandments, as a child loves and obeys parents? Or am I more concerned about the things of this world? Have I a right intention in what I do, seeking above all to fulfill the will of God? God spoke to us in his Son. Is my faith in God firm and secure? Am I wholehearted in accepting the Church's teaching? Have I been careful to grow in my understanding of the faith, to hear God's word, to study the doctrine of the Church, to avoid dangers to faith? Have I been strong and fearless in professing my faith in God and the Church? Am I consistent with the faith in public and private life? Have I prayed morning and evening? When I pray, do I really raise my mind and heart to God or is it a matter of words only? Do I offer God my difficulties, my joys, and my sorrows? Do I turn to God in time of temptation? Do I have love and reverence for God's name? Have I offended him by blasphemy, swearing falsely, or taking his name in vain? Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints? Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days--or caused others to do so--through my own fault? Have I participated in Mass with attention and devotion? Have I fulfilled the precept of annual confession and of communion during the Easter season? Are there "false gods" in my life: superstition, spiritism or other occult practices; money or other things, human ambitions or even persons that mean more to me than God does?

Questions related to the commandment of a right love of self and the love of neighbor: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"

Where is my life leading me? Is the hope of eternal life my inspiration? Am I really trying to grow in a spiritual life through prayer, reading the word of God and meditating on it, receiving the sacraments, self-denial and acceptance of the sorrows and disappointments of life for the love of Christ? Have I kept the precept of fasting and abstinence? Have I strived to control my vices, my bad inclinations and passions, e.g. envy, love of food and drink? Have I fought especially against self-love or have I been proud and boastful, thinking myself better in the sight of God and despising others as less important than myself? Have I imposed my own will on others, without respecting their freedom and rights? What use have I made of time, of health and strength, of the gifts God has given me, like the talents of the Gospel? Do I use them for the glory of God and the good of others and my true good? Do I use them fully, or have I been lazy and too much given to leisure? Do I have a genuine love for my neighbors? Or do I use others for my own ends, or do to them what I would not want done to myself? Have I given grave scandal by my words or actions?

In my family life, have I contributed to the well-being and happiness of the others by patience and genuine love? Have I been obedient to parents, showing them proper respect and giving them help in their spiritual and material needs? Have I been careful to give a Christian upbringing to my children, and to help them by good example and by exercising authority as a parent? Have I been faithful to my husband (wife) in my heart and in my relations with others? Do I share my possessions with the less fortunate? Do I do my best to help the victims of oppression, misfortune, and poverty? Or do I look down on my neighbor, especially the poor, the sick, the elderly, strangers, and people of other races? Does my life reflect the mission I received in confirmation? Do I share in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and in the life of my parish? Have I helped to meet the needs of the Church and of the world and prayed for them: for unity in the Church, for the spread of the Gospel among nations, for peace and justice, etc.?

Am I concerned for the good and prosperity of the human community in which I live, or do I spend my life caring only for myself? Do I share to the best of my ability in the work of promoting justice, morality, harmony, and love in human relations? Have I done my duty as a citizen? Have I paid my taxes? In my work or profession am I just, hardworking, honest, serving society out of love of others? Have I paid a fair wage to my employees? Have I been faithful to my promises and contracts? Have I obeyed legitimate authority and given it due respect? If I am in a position of responsibility or authority, do I use this for my own advantage or for the good of others, in a spirit of service? Have I done violence to others by damage to life or limb, reputation, honor or material possessions? Have I been responsible for advising an abortion or procuring one? Have I been involved in permitting or encouraging the breakdown of matrimony and its integrity through artificial fertilization? Have I kept up hatred for others? Am I estranged from others through quarrels, enmity, insults, anger? Have I been guilty of refusing to testify to the innocence of another because of selfishness?

Have I kept my senses and my whole body pure and chaste as a temple of the Holy Spirit, consecrated for resurrection and glory, and in order to have the self-mastery and selfless love required to live out my vocation in life? Have I dishonored my body by fornication, impurity, unworthy conversation or thoughts, evil desires, or actions? Have I given in to sensuality? Have I indulged in reading, conversation, shows, internet pages and entertainments that offend against Christian and human decency? Have I encouraged others to sin by my own failure to maintain these standards? Have I been faithful to the moral law in my married life? Am I guilty of the sin of contraception? Have I been truthful and fair, or have I injured others by deceit, calumny, detraction, rash judgment, or violation of a secret? Have I stolen the property of others? Have I desired it unjustly and inordinately? Have I damaged it? Have I made restitution of other people's property and made good their loss? If I have been injured, have I been ready to make peace for the love of Christ and to forgive, or do I harbor hatred and the desire for revenge?