

TERMS TO KNOW

Sacrament of Reconciliation: is also known as the Sacrament of Confession.

Sin: is the deliberate violation of God's law.

Venial Sin: is a minor offense against God's law that hurts our relationship with God, but does not destroy it.

Mortal Sin: is a deliberate and free choice of something known to be seriously wrong that separates and destroys our friendship with God.

Contrition: is true sorrow for our sins and the firm intention to amend our lives and avoid all occasions of sin (these include situations, persons, places, and things that lead us to sin).

Penance: is any voluntary act of reparation, self-punishment, etc., to show repentance for a sin or wrongdoing.

PREPARING FOR RECONCILIATION

Pray to the Holy Spirit for self-knowledge and trust in the mercy of God.

Examine your consciences, be truly sorry for your sins and resolve to change your life.

RECOGNIZING SIN

We all sin, but we do not all acknowledge our sins. Contemporary society is often blind to the reality of sin and sometimes, even presents sinful behavior or lifestyles as positive or even desirable. St. John reminds us that, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." As followers of Jesus, we need to examine our lives and recognize our sinful thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions, so that we can bring them to God for forgiveness.

CONTRITION: WHAT IS IT?

We need contrition (sorrow for our sins) to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It must include a commitment to change our lives and avoid all forms of sin. Sorrow for sin is very different from sadness and self-hatred. As we draw closer to God, our sense of sin and sorrow for sin become deeper, just as do our joy, peace of heart, and purity of conscience.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my god, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins because of your just punishment, 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 sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. (Amen).

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

* Do I put anything or anyone above God?

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

* Have I used God's holy name irreverently or in swearing?

Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

* Have I deliberately come late or left early from Mass without good reason? Have I skipped Mass altogether?

Honor your father and your mother.

* Have I deliberately hurt my parents? Have I told them lies?

You shall not kill.

* Have I deliberately harmed anyone?

You shall not commit adultery.

* Have I deliberately viewed pornography in magazines, videos, or on websites? Do I dress modestly?

You shall not steal.

- * Have I stolen or accepted stolen goods? Have I cheated anyone of what I owe? Have I pirated videos, music, software?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- * Have I ruined the good name of others by spreading lies or maliciously revealing their faults or sins? Do I gossip?

You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

- * Do I guard my imagination and senses?

You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.

- * Am I envious of the possessions or success of others?

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

- * Have I ridiculed or humiliated others? Do I forgive those who have hurt me? Have I wished anyone harm?

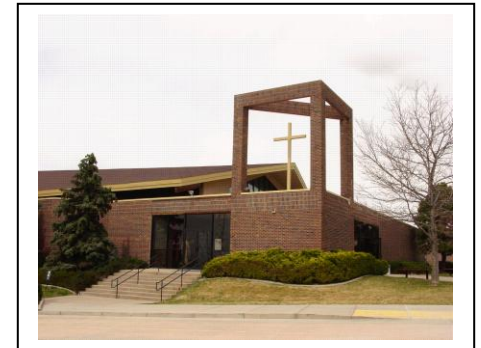
HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

- * Go to the priest and begin with the Sign of the Cross. The priest may begin by welcoming you and may quote Scripture. You should answer, "Amen" then continue with "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been (say the length of time since your last confession) since my last confession."
- * Confess your sins openly and candidly.
- * Listen to the priest for whatever counsel he may judge appropriate. If you have any questions about faith, how to grow in holiness or whether something is a sin, feel free to ask him. Then the priest will assign you penance.
- * Pray the Act of Contrition (refer to the inside of this brochure) when the priest asks you for it.
- * Listen as the priest absolves you of your sins and enjoy the fact that God has truly freed you from all your sins.
- * Do the penance the priest assigns you.

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AVE MARIA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Parish Youth



A Guide to Confession for Teens

