

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." (Ex 20:16)

- Did I lie? Have my lies caused spiritual or physical harm to others?
- Have I told lies about anybody?
- Have I injured others by revealing true hidden faults?
- Did I commit perjury? Have I been guilty of refusing to testify to the innocence of another because of fear or selfishness?
- Have I engaged in uncharitable talk or gossip?
- Have I encouraged the spread of scandal?
- Am I guilty of any type of fraud?
- Did I insult or tease others with the intention of hurting them?
- Have I falsely flattered others?
- Have I made rash judgments about others?
- Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

OTHER SINS

- Did I intentionally refuse to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?
- Have I fulfilled my obligation to go to confession at least once a year and of going worthily to Holy Communion at least during the Easter season?
- Did I fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?
- Did I abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?

HOW TO MAKE CONFESSION

If you need help, just let the priest know. Begin with the sign of the Cross, saying:

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest may encourage you to have confidence in God's mercy and read from Sacred Scripture.

Start with the words:

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (however many days, weeks, months or years) since my last confession.

Tell the priest your state in life eg. Married, and the sins you have identified. Remember you must tell him everything you remember. Do not be afraid; trust in God's mercy in this Holy Year. Remember this will be a fresh start, so have the intention not to commit the sins again. When you have finished telling the priest your sins say:
For these and all the sins I cannot remember, I am truly sorry.

The priest offers some advice and gives you a penance. If you think you may have a problem completing the penance then tell the priest. He will ask you to make an act of contrition. You may use the following:

O My God, I am heartily sorry for all my sins, because they offend you, who are infinitely good, and I firmly resolve, with your help, never to offend you again.

*The priest will pray the prayer of absolution after which you say **Amen** and then he will dismiss you.*

Now go perform the penance you were given in the knowledge God has been merciful.



A GUIDE TO MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION

Approaching the confessional can be a daunting step, especially if you have not been for some time. Recall the words of Jesus and "Do not be afraid". Confession is a great gift of Mercy and healing. Even priests go to Confession, so they know what it is like!

PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

The first step to making a good Confession is the art of good preparation. Pray to God and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you as you review your life in the light of the commandments and the life of Christ himself.

Always be specific when telling the priest your sins. Avoid generalizing, as the priest is there to help you move forward and start again.

Remember you must confess mortal sins in number and kind. "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." (CCC 1857). It helps to think of 'grave matter' as being defined as a direct violation of one of the commandments. The priest will help understand the severity of any sins committed.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

It is helpful to examine the conscience by reflecting upon the Ten Commandments. This section is provided as an aid to reflection.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

"I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me." (Ex 20:2,3)

- Have I loved God above all or have I put other things – work, money, drugs, TV, fame, pleasure, other people – ahead of Him?
- Have I made time for prayer each day?
- Have I denied my faith or endangered it through practices of the occult or by reading or taking part in things that are opposed to faith and morals?
- Do I pick and choose the parts of God's message that I find convenient and forsake other parts?
- Have I tried to learn and understand my faith better?

SECOND COMMANDMENT

"You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain." (Ex 20:7)

- Do I love and have reverence for God's Name?
- Have I committed blasphemy, cursing, or treated God's name carelessly?
- Do I try to be faithful to the promises I have made to God, especially those of my Baptism and Confirmation?
- Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, the Church, holy things or holy people?

THIRD COMMANDMENT

"Keep holy the Sabbath Day." (Ex 20:8)

- Have I missed Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- Have I fully, consciously and actively participated in Mass?
- Have I arrived at Mass late due to carelessness?
- Have I left early without a serious reason?
- Have I kept the Eucharistic fast before Mass?
- Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?
- Did I do work on Sunday that was not necessary?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

"Honour father and your mother." (Ex 20:12)

- Do I neglect my duties to my family?
- Have I been grateful for my parents?
- Have I disrespected my family members?
- Have I caused tension in my family?
- Have I encouraged my children in their faith by giving them a Christian education and praying with them?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

"You shall not kill." (Ex 20:13)

- Have I killed or try to physically harm someone?
- Have I attempted suicide or entertained thoughts of taking my life?
- Have I had an abortion, or encouraged or helped someone else to have one?
- Have I participated in abortion through silence, financial support or voting candidates who support it?

- Have I taken part in, or supported, so-called "mercy killing" (euthanasia)?
- Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

SIXTH & NINTH COMMANDMENTS

"You shall not commit adultery." (Ex 20:14)

"You shall not covet your neighbour's wife." (Ex 20:17)

- Have I remembered that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- Have I entertained impure thoughts?
- Have I used pornographic material?
- Have I committed impure acts with myself or with others (used the sexual faculty outside marriage)?
- Have I been faithful in heart to my spouse?
- Have I used Artificial Birth Control?
- Am I married according to the laws of the Church?
- Did I advise or encourage anyone to marry outside the Church?

SEVENTH & TENTH COMMANDMENTS

"You shall not steal." (Ex 20:15)

"You shall not covet your neighbour's goods." (Ex 20:17)

- Have I been greedy or envious?
- Have I made acquiring material goods the focus of my life?
- Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or to keep stolen goods?
- Have I received stolen goods?
- Do I fulfil my obligations in life and work?
- Do I share my time, talents and treasure in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and in the life of my parish?