

Guide to Confession

This small pamphlet is by no means a treatise for this greatest and holiest of sacraments - that of Repentance and Confession. This subject presupposes extensive study and knowledge of similar enlightening books or text, along with discussions followed by question and answer sessions conducted by individuals experienced in such matters. This is simply to serve as a brief reminder for a better and more concrete preparation for this Holy Sacrament.

However, you must know that the greatest science and the hardest skill is to try and come to true knowledge of yourself, and at the same time not to lose the greatest of treasures that every human soul truly thirsts for that of Salvation. This salvation is offered exclusively by the Godman and Savior, Jesus Christ, who Himself founded and instituted the Sacrament of Penance/Holy Confession, and the unique means of salvation in His church.

For this reason you must overcome any and as many obstacles that stand in your path to the Holy Confessional. There awaits you with much affection, the representative of Christ the Spiritual Father, who being human like you is capable of understanding and sympathizing with his brothers who are fellow sinners.

So do away with any thought of embarrassment or fear. What is there to be afraid of or embarrassed by when your soul is suffering and being torn by the terrible consequences of many kinds of sin? When you were physically ill and you were suffering not from one but many illnesses, did you ever avoid the doctor or the hospital due to embarrassment?

And again, do not be misled by some people who simply ask to have the "absolution prayer" read to them without going through the actual confession. Whenever this takes place, whether from ignorance or negligence, this is a terrible sin and a mockery of God.

Therefore, with faith and sincerity, walk out towards the Holy Confessional. And you must be absolutely certain that the infinite love of the Crucified Savior will receive you and deliver you and take the weight off your shoulders. He says "come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:27 - Divinity)

You and God

1. Do you believe in God and the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in the Church and her sacraments? Do you believe in the existence of Paradise and Hell?
2. Do you entrust yourself always, and especially in the difficult times of your life, to the Providence of God, or do you become discouraged and show lack of faith?
3. Perhaps at times of affliction, illness, and trials in your life, you grumble against God and you lose your faith and courage?
4. Perhaps you believe in psychics, card-readers, astrologers and horoscopes? In sorcerers and witches, in palm reading or general fortune tellers? Perhaps you advised others to believe and take refuge in these?
5. Perhaps you believe in superstitions and you pay attention to "bad omens" such as the number 13, walking under a ladder, crossing the path of a black cat, spilling salt, and other bad luck beliefs?
6. Perhaps you believe in luck?
7. Do you do your prayers in the morning and evening and also during mealtime? Perhaps you are embarrassed to Cross yourself in front of other people (i.e., at a restaurant or while passing by the outside of a Holy Church)?
8. Do you study the Holy Scriptures, along with various other religious books?
9. Do you attend church on Sundays and on major feast days?
10. Do you attend the Holy Liturgy from beginning to end, or do you get there late and leave before it finishes?
11. Do you go to church dressed modestly? Are you careful not to laugh or start conversation with others, even during the sacraments of Marriage or Baptism?
12. Perhaps you hinder your husband, wife or children from attending church? Do you tell you acquaintances not to attend church?
13. Do you receive Holy Communion often, or once a year and that without going to Holy Confession?
14. Do you swear with no reason or falsely, and did you not keep an oath or a pledge you took?
15. Perhaps you blaspheme the name of Christ, the Panagia (Virgin Mary) and our Saints?
16. Do you fast if you don't have serious health problems; on Wednesday and Friday and during Lenten seasons?
17. Perhaps you throw religious books or pamphlets in dirty places?

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Your Relations with Others

1. Perhaps you have hatred or strong dislike towards someone who treated you badly or insulted you in his anger?
2. Perhaps you are suspicious, and with no reasons you distrust everyone, suspecting that they may be talking about you, that they don't like you or love you?
3. Perhaps you get jealous and bothered about the progress, the happiness, the beauty, and the goods of other people?
4. Perhaps you stay untouched and unmoved in the presence of your neighbor's misfortune or serious need?
5. In your everyday transactions with your partner, coworkers or customers, are you honest, straightforward, sincere, and upright?
6. Perhaps you slandered or accused your fellow man?
7. Perhaps you speak sarcastically and make fun of the devout and those who fast and struggle to live a true Christian life? Or those that have physical or spiritual weaknesses or limitations?
8. While you happened to hear some information or accusation against a third person, perhaps you told others, and you damaged, without meaning to, the reputation and honor of your fellow human being?
9. Perhaps you pass judgment on the behavior, the deeds, the mistakes, or the shortcomings of others when they are absent, even when what you are saying happens to be true?
10. Perhaps you cursed someone who did you wrong, or cursed yourself in difficult situations of your life, or the time and moment that you were born?
11. Perhaps you send people to "Hell" or the "devil" in your anger, or use insulting hand gestures?
12. Do you respect your parents? Do you care for them? Do you put up with their elderly weakness if they have any? Do you help them with their physical and spiritual needs? Do you help them go to church and receive communion? Perhaps you may have deserted them and treat them with indifference?
13. Perhaps you influenced and convinced your parents to give you the lion's share of their inheritance and in this way dealt unfairly with your brother?
14. Did you strike anybody in your anger, or abuse him verbally?
15. Do you carry on your vocation with integrity?
16. Do you steal? Or did you suggest it to someone or helped him do it or agreed to cover for the thief. or

17. Perhaps you are ungrateful and thankless to God, and to people that are good to you?
18. Perhaps you hang around with the wrong crowd and are involved in sinful relations? Perhaps you pushed someone to sin either by your example or talking them into it?
19. Perhaps you have committed forgery? Perhaps you have taken advantage of the Public? Perhaps you borrowed money or other objects and failed to return them?
20. Did you ever commit murder in any way?
21. Do you get mixed up in other peoples lives, work, or family and cause arguments and fights?
22. Do you give to the poor, the orphans, the elderly, the large and poor families that you know?

Yourself

1. Have you been attached to material things and worldly goods?
2. Have you been stingy and a lover of money?
3. Have you been greedy?
4. Have you been a spendthrift? Your surplus belongs to the poor?
5. Have you been conceited?
6. Perhaps you like to show off your clothes, your wealth, your success or your child's grades?
7. Perhaps you crave admiration and adulation from the people around you?
8. Do you accept praise with pleasure, wanting others to flatter you and say that there is no one like you?
9. Do you get upset when someone points out your mistakes and do you get hurt when you get reprimanded or corrected by your superiors?
10. Perhaps you are stubborn, obstinate, egotistical, self-proud and self-centered? Pay attention to these sins because it is difficult to rid of them.
11. Do you play cards - even though you may not use money - with people in your home or with relatives looking to "kill time?"
12. Have you polluted your body and soul with carnal sins?
13. Do you watch filthy programs on television or at the movies?
14. Have you been reading obscene books and magazines?
15. Have you ever considered suicide?
16. Have you ever been gluttonous?
17. Have you been lazy, insolent and negligent?
18. Have you been using obscene, insulting, or improper words, for the sake of being comical or to insult and humiliate another person?
19. Do you have a spirit of self denial?

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20. Do you expel from your mind any bad thoughts that come to pollute your head?
21. Do you control your eyes so that they don't curiously examine provocative pictures or people?
22. Do you control what goes into your ears?
23. Do you dress indecently? If you are a woman, have you been wearing men's clothing or provocative clothing and been causing scandal by your appearance, and most importantly entering holy places in such a manner? If you are a man do you have a frantic appearance?
24. Perhaps you take part in frantic or sinful dancing? Do you sing or listen to immoral songs - especially rock and roll?
25. Perhaps you drink heavily?
26. Have you been smoking cigarettes? Smoking destroys a person's valuable health and happens to be a sinful waste of money.

For Couples

1. Are you loyal to your spouse? It is terrible when one of the partners is having extramarital relations.
2. Perhaps one of the partners offended or saddened the other in the presence of others or privately?
3. Perhaps you don't overlook each other's possible weaknesses? Have you been insensitive?
4. Perhaps you, the husband, encourage your wife to follow the latest fashions and any crazy fad which contradicts God's Law? Perhaps you, the wife, influence your husband towards parties, expecting him to give you the means to follow the different fashions and the way of the world?
5. Are you sensitive to the struggle that one of you has outside of the house and the other inside the house, so you can support each other in the daily struggle, thus providing comfort to each other psychologically, emotionally and physically.
6. As the husband, have you been overly demanding?
7. Perhaps you don't allow your wife or your husband to go to church or to spiritual gatherings or sermons?
8. Do you raise your children "with the teachings and the way of the Lord?" Have you been only interested in their intellectual education and ignoring the quality of their personality?
9. Do you take them to Church, to Holy Confession, to frequent Holy Communion, to Sunday School? Do you teach them with words and your exemplary virtues? Did you teach them to pray morning and

- night and also at mealtime with seriousness and devotion?
10. Are you aware of what they read? Do you try and get them books or magazines of ethical and religious content?
11. Are you aware of whom they associate with and whom they have as friends?
12. Have you been taking them to sinful shows or movies and do you allow them to watch television indiscriminately, timelessly and without parental scrutiny?
13. Do you teach them humility and are you concerned that they dress modestly?
14. Perhaps you curse them when they aggravate you? Perhaps you send them to Hell?
15. Perhaps you had an abortion or you avoid childbearing?
16. Have you been unjust to your children with the distribution of your property?
17. You, the husband, are you under the impression that child rearing and development is the responsibility of your wife? You are also responsible to read to them, to advise them and spend time with them so you can give your wife a break, and also to let the children feel your presence so that they can hold back and not get into trouble.
18. Perhaps you abuse them verbally and you scold them with indecent words?
19. Do you love and honor each other's parents and relatives? Have your parents or relatives been interfering in your home life and become the reason for dissension and quarreling between you?
20. Perhaps you have been interfering in the home life of your child?
21. Perhaps your husband is a blasphemer? Be patient and struggle so that he can quit the evil of blasphemy?

Orig. A.B.
Trans. K.Z.