

# CONFESSION: STEP BY STEP

## STEP 1: PREPARE FOR CONFESSION



Before going to Confession, do an examination of conscience to reflect on what sins you have committed. Say a prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance. If you are worried you won't remember your sins, it's OK to make a written list and bring it with you to Confession.

*It is important that you are truly sorry for your sins (contrition) and that you are determined to try and avoid committing these sins in the future (resolution).*

## STEP 2: GO TO CONFESSION



When you enter the confessional, you can choose to kneel behind the screen and confess anonymously or to walk over and sit in the chair across from Father to confess face-to-face.

**BEGIN WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS:**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

### CONFESS YOUR SINS:

- Begin by saying, **“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (# of weeks/months/years) since my last confession. These are my sins.”** If you are not doing a face-to-face confession, it can be helpful to the priest to say your age, marital status, or other important characteristics.
- Next, **tell the priest all of the sins you have committed** and if possible indicate the number or frequency of the sin. Is this something you do often or was it just once?
- When you have said all your sins, end with, **“For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry.”**

### LISTEN TO THE PRIEST:

- Listen closely as the priest talks to you and gives you your penance.
- The priest will ask you to **pray an Act of Contrition** (see back) out loud.
- When you finish, the priest will extend his hand and say the prayer of absolution: God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. You reply, **“Amen.”**
- Lastly, the priest will dismiss you with a prayer, such as: The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace. You respond, **“Thanks be to God”** and leave the confessional.

## STEP 3: COMPLETE YOUR PENANCE



After leaving the confessional, go into a pew, kneel down and say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his mercy and love. If the penance given by the priest is to say certain prayers, complete your penance in the church. If your penance is something else, such as making amends with a person, try to complete this as soon as you can.

# **ACT OF CONTRITION**

There are many different versions of the Act of Contrition. Choose one of the following to say in Confession. A copy of the prayer is also posted in the Confessional.

**O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments. But most of all because I have offended 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.**

*or*

**My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.**

*or*

**O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.**