

## RECOGNIZING SIN AND GROWING IN HOLINESS

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. Such an examination of conscience should be done regularly, always with trust in God's mercy and love and in the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We all sin, but we do not all acknowledge our sins. It takes honesty and courage to reflect upon our refusals of God's grace and our rejections of his law of love. Contemporary society is often blind to the reality of sin, and sometimes even presents sinful behaviors of lifestyles as positive goods to be sought and desired. In his encyclical *Reconciliation and Penance* (1984), Pope John Paul II suggests that the defining sin of modern times is the "loss of the sense of sin" and reminds us of St. John's words: "If we say 'we are without sin', we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8).

Sin is the deliberate violation of God's law. Although sin promises illusory goods or happiness, it results in harm to the sinner, who is always the primary victim of sin. The church teaches that there are two kinds of sin: mortal and venial. Mortal sin is a deliberate and free choice of something known to be seriously wrong that destroys our friendship with God and separates us from him (cf. 1 Jn 5:16-17). All of the following three conditions must be met for a sin to be mortal: (1) it must be something serious; (2) it must be done with sufficient knowledge of its gravity; and (3) it must be done with sufficient freedom of the will. Venial sin is a minor offence against God's law that hurts our relationship with God but does not destroy it.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the ordinary way to have our sins forgiven. It is an encounter with the mercy of the living God. Who meets us where we are in our weakness and our sins, and it powerfully deepens our psychological and spiritual growth. The source of many graces, it should be celebrated regularly and whenever the need is felt. Monthly confession is a healthy and effective means of growing closer to God and leading a balanced, Christ-centered life.

***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Mt.11,28***

## Times for Confession

**Wednesday:**

**9:45am-10:45am & 5:00pm –5:45pm**

**Saturdays:**

**3:00pm – 4:00pm**

*The Sacrament of Confession is NOT for spiritual direction.*

*If you have questions and would want to speak with a priest, please call the Parish Office at (425) 481-0303 to make an appointment with a priest. Thank you.*

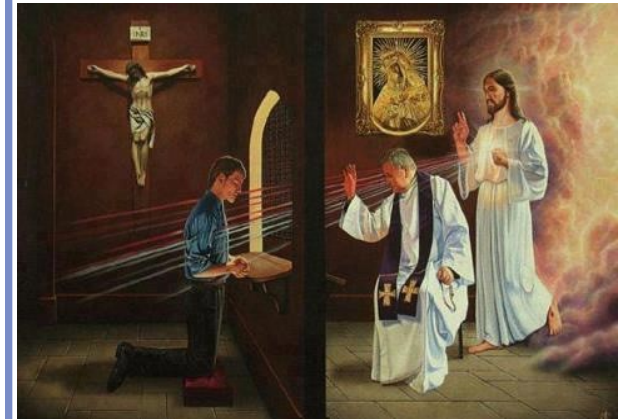
**An Act of Contrition**  
**"My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior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

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

2316 180th ST SE Bothell, WA 98012

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic parish is served by the Religious Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit from Christ the Priest Province under the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.**

# Guide to Confession



## PREPARING FOR RECONCILIATION

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation(Confession), we encounter Jesus Christ, who after rising from the dead breathed the Holy Spirit on his Apostles—the first priest— and gave them the power to forgive sins in his name (Jn 20:23).

The Heart of Christ burns with love for us and he wants us to experience his immerse and unfathomable mercy by confessing our sins and receiving his forgiveness. This sacrament gives us the consolation of God's pardon and strengthens our relationship with Christ and his Church.

## PRAYER TO OUR LADY BEFORE THE CONFESSION

*"Mary, Mother of Jesus and my Mother, your son died on a cross for me. Help me confess my sins humbly and with trust in the mercy of God, that I may receive his pardon and peace."*

## HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

- \* Pray to the Holy Spirit for self-knowledge and trust in the mercy of God. Examine your conscience, be truly sorry for your sins, and resolve to change your life.
- \* Go to the priest and begin with the Sign of the Cross. Welcoming you, the priest will say: "May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy," or similar words taken from Scripture. Your answer: AMEN. Then say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_ weeks/months/years since my last confession."
- \* Confess your sins openly and candidly. Tell the priest of all mortal sins and the number of times each was committed since your last confession; you may also mention some mortal sin from your past life for which you are particularly sorry, indicating that it has been confessed.
- \* Then listen to the priest for whatever counsel he may judge appropriate. If you have any question about the faith, how to grow in holiness, or whether something is a sin, feel free to ask him. Then the priest will assign you a penance.
- \* Pray the Act of Contrition when the priest tells you.
- \* Listen as the priest absolves you of your sins and enjoy the fact that God has truly freed you from all your sins. If you forget to confess a mortal sin, you are still forgiven, but must mention it the next time you go to confession.
- \* Do the penance the priest assigns you.

***If you are anxious or unsure of what to do, take this guide with you or tell the priest and he will make it easier for you.***

## Examination of Conscience

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

- Do I give God time every day in prayer?
- Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart?
- Have I been involved with superstitious practices or have I been involved with the occult?
- Do I seek to surrender myself to God's word as taught by the Church?
- Have I ever received communion in the state of mortal sin?
- Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession or have I withheld a mortal sin from the priest in Confession?
- Are there other "gods" in my life? Money, Security, Power, People, etc.?

### ***2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.***

- Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?
- Have I been angry with God?
- Have I wished evil upon any other person?
- Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

### ***3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.***

- Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?
- Have I tried to observe Sunday as a family day and a day of rest?
- Do I do needless work on Sunday?

### ***4. Honor your father and your mother.***

- Do I honor and obey my parents?
- Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?
- Have I given my family good religious example?
- Do I try to bring peace into my home life?
- Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

### ***5. You shall not kill.***

- Have I had an abortion or encouraged or helped anyone to have an abortion?
- Have I physically harmed anyone?
- Have I abused alcohol or drugs?
- Did I give scandal to anyone, thereby leading him or her into sin?
- Have I been angry or resentful?
- Have I harbored hatred in my heart?
- Have I mutilated myself through any form of sterilization?
- Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?
- Have I engaged, in any way, in sins against human life such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization?
- Have I participated in or approved of euthanasia?

### ***6. You shall not commit adultery.***

- Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?
- Have I engaged in any sexual activity outside of marriage?
- Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control in my marriage?
- Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?
- Have I been guilty of masturbation?
- Do I seek to control my thoughts and imaginations?
- Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as mere objects?
- Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity?
- Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words, actions?
- Am I careful to dress modestly?

### ***7. You shall not steal.***

- Have I stolen what is not mine?
- Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?
- Do I waste time at work, school, and home?
- Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying my family of their needs?
- Do I pay my debts promptly?
- Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?
- Have I cheated anyone out of what is justly theirs, for example creditors, insurance companies, big corporations?

### ***8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.***

- Have I lied? Have I gossiped?
- Do I speak badly of others behind their back?
- Am I sincere in my dealings with others?
- Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?
- Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?
- Have I injured the reputation of others by slanders?

### ***9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.***

- Have I consented to impure thoughts?
- Have I caused them by impure reading, movies, television, conversation or curiosity?
- Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?
- Have I behaved in an inappropriate way with members of the opposite sex: flirting, being superficial, etc.?

### ***10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.***

- Am I jealous of what other people have?
- Do I envy the families or possessions of others?
- Am I greedy or selfish?
- Are material possessions the purpose of my life?