

At the End of Confession

Listen to the words of absolution — the sacramental forgiveness of the Church through the priest. God forgives our sins. You may make the sign of the cross with the priest. If he closes by saying, “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,” answer “His mercy endures forever.”

Remember

If you need help — especially if you have been away for some time — simply ask the priest and he will help you by “walking” you through the steps to make a good confession.

After Confession

Complete your penance. It serves to repair the harm caused by sin in our life and it seeks to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ.

Give thanks to God for forgiving you. God’s mercy is without end. If you recall some serious sin you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others, but be sure to confess it in your next confession.

Change your life. Go forward with God’s help and begin to live a new life of freedom from the slavery of sin.

Resolve to return often to the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. We Catholics are fortunate to have this sacrament. It is the ordinary way to be reconciled with God and the Church. The sacrament is a powerful help to rid us of our weaknesses, to grow in holiness, and to lead a balanced and virtuous life. It is a celebration of God’s forgiveness.

Sin in my Life

Sin has been present in human history and is present in our lives. As a Catholic follower of Christ, I must make an effort to recognize sin in my actions, words and omissions.

The Gospels show the importance of forgiveness of sins. The lives of the saints prove that persons who grow in holiness have a stronger sense of sin, sorrow for sins, and a mature need for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

The Differences in Sins

As a result of Original Sin, human nature is weakened. Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ’s grace, takes away Original Sin, and turns us back toward God. The consequences of this weakness and the inclination to evil persist, and we often commit personal or actual sin.

There are two kinds of actual sin, *mortal and venial.*

Mortal sin is a deadly offense against God, so horrible that it destroys the life of grace in the soul. Three simultaneous conditions constitute a mortal sin:

- 1) the act must be something very serious;
- 2) the person must have sufficient understanding of what is being done;
- 3) the person must have sufficient freedom of will.

Office of Worship
Archdiocese of Dubuque

A Guide for Individual Reconciliation

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The basic requirement for a good confession is to have the intention of returning to God like the “prodigal son” and to acknowledge our sins with true sorrow before the priest.



“To those who have been far away from the sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love, I make this appeal: come back to this source of grace, do not be afraid! Christ himself is waiting for you. He will heal you, and you will be at peace with God!”

Pope John Paul II

Before Celebrating the Sacrament

Be truly sorry for your sins. The most important act of the penitent, is heartfelt contrition, a rejection of the sin committed, and a resolution not to commit it again. Flowing from a love for God, the resolution is a sign of true repentance. God's grace, in cooperation with the intention to change, gives strength to resist and overcome temptation in the future.

Advent Voices: Examin of Conscience

Before going, make an honest review of your sins since your last sacramental confession.

Week 1: The Attentive Voice

Who/what commands a disproportionate amount of my attention?

What important things have I neglected giving attention to?

Do I consistently make excuses to not pray?

What gets in the way of my prayer routine?

Do I *listen* during my prayer?

Am I attentive to the needs of my family? My friends?

Am I attentive to the needs of my neighbors or the particular needs of my town?

Have I lacked gratitude in the midst of my day?

Am I always looking for greener pastures and missing opportunities for everyday holiness?

Have I been jealous of another's vocation?

Week 2: The Repentant Voice

Have I buried a particular sin? Do I find ways to justify it?

Do I lack an awareness of sin in my life?

Do I feel unworthy of or rejected God's mercy?

Have I sought forgiveness from those whom I've wronged? Am I peacemaker?

Have I extended forgiveness to those who have wronged me?

Do I harbor anger, bitterness, or grudges?



Do I make amends and carry through on my penances?

Do I turn to the Lord and seek his grace when I can't seem to turn away from sin or offer forgiveness to another?

Week 3: The Prophetic Voice

Do I lead others to Jesus by my words/actions?

Do I shy away from healthy confrontation or fraternal correction?

Am I paralyzed by fear to stand up for the truth?

Have I become complacent in my spiritual life?

Do I pray for the strength to be a prophetic voice to my family and community?

Do I take the prophetic voice of the Church seriously?

Am I watchful and alert? Do I prepare for Second Coming of Christ?

Week 4: The Obedient Voice

Do I choose sacrificing my will for love of God?

Have I trusted God has my best interest in mind?

Am I attentive to the Holy Spirit in my prayer and do I follow through?

Do I have apathy or disrespect toward authority?

Do I allow myself to be taught and challenged by others or do I feel I am always right?

Have I obeyed potentially harmful voices?

Have I delayed obedience to the Lord?

To the Church?

During Confession

After prayerfully preparing to receive the sacrament, go into the reconciliation room. You may choose to be face-to-face with the priest or use the screen for anonymity.

You and the priest may greet one another. Make the sign of the cross, "**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**" The priest may urge you to have confidence in God's mercy and love.

You may indicate the interval since your last confession or anything else that may help. You or the priest may read a passage from the Bible.

Say the sins that you remember. In order to make a good confession one must confess all sins, according to kind and number. You may want to discuss the sins you confess so the priest can offer practical advice.

Listen to the words of the priest. You will receive a penance. Do this penance to indicate to God the sincerity in your heart.

You will be invited to express a prayer of sorrow and your intention to begin a new life. This is called an act of contrition.

Act of Contrition

(Two popular forms)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. 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 confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. 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. Amen.