

## At Confession

You can take this leaflet in with you to Confession. If there is a choice, you may kneel behind the grille so that the priest cannot see you. (Even if you were taught to go face to face when you were younger.)

Begin by making the sign of the cross with the priest.

Then you can speak in your own words or you can say:

**Bless me Father for I have sinned.  
My last confession was ... ago** (say roughly how long)  
**and these are my sins.**

Now tell your sins simply in your own words. When you have finished, let the priest know. You can use these words if you wish:

**I am sorry for all these sins  
and for any that I cannot now remember**

The priest will now talk to you and ask you to do a penance.

You can ask him questions if you want. He will ask you to say an act of contrition (act of sorrow). Here is one that you can say.

**O my God, I am very sorry and beg pardon for all my sins, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour, Jesus Christ, and most of all because they have offended Thine infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin. Amen.**

Wait while the priest says the prayer of absolution (where Christ forgives you all your sins.) Make the sign of the cross as the priest says:

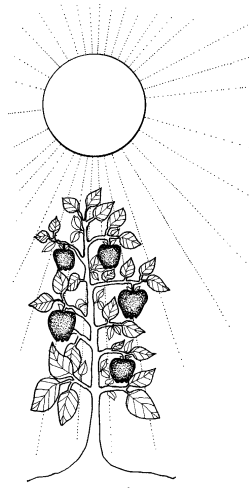
*I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father ✠  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## After Confession

If the priest asked you to say some prayers for your penance, say these now.

Say a prayer to thank God for forgiving your sins. Make up your mind to try and love God with all your heart and soul and mind and to try and love your neighbour as yourself. Here is a prayer you can say if you wish

**O God, I thank you for forgiving me my sins.  
I will try now to love you  
with all my heart and soul and mind  
and I will try to love others too.  
Help me by your grace.**



*Remember to come to  
Confession often so  
that you can meet  
Jesus and receive his  
grace. We can think  
of grace as the  
“sunshine of the  
soul”.*

# The Sacrament of Confession

a guide for adults



This leaflet is designed to help you to prepare for, and celebrate the Sacrament of Penance.

**You may take a copy home  
to keep if you wish.**

## Before Confession

Before you receive the sacrament, spend some time preparing yourself in mind and heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to celebrate the sacrament well.

Next make a careful “examination of conscience”. To do that, think carefully about your life and the things for which you need forgiveness. There is some more information on the next page.

When you have thought of the sins you need to confess, say another prayer to make the best use of the sacrament. Here is one you can say if you wish:

**Merciful God, I humbly thank you for your loving kindness to me at all times, especially your patience and long-suffering with me, a wretched sinner. Bad as I am, it is thanks to your great mercy that I have not fallen further away from you by committing even more serious sins, and that I have not been called to judgement to answer for my sinful life. O my God, I beg you to receive me back now as I struggle to return to you. I earnestly desire to be truly sorry for my sins, and to use the time given to me in the future to try to make up for the sins I have committed in the past.**

**Give me light, O my God, to see what sins I have committed since my last confession, and the grace humbly to confess them. I ask you to help me to be truly sorry for them. Grant me perfect sorrow so that I may obtain forgiveness for all my sins.**

## Examination of conscience

First try to remember how long it is since you last went to Confession. You only need to remember *roughly* how long it is.

Then ask yourself how you have offended God by any sins against him and by any sins against others. You can use the following questions if they help you but remember it is *your* confession and you need to think how you personally have sinned and how you personally need God’s help.

### Sins against God

Have I rejected my faith, refused to find out more about it?  
Have I forgotten my daily prayers or said them badly?  
Have I experimented with the occult or put my trust in fortune tellers or horoscopes?  
Have I blasphemed against God?  
Have I shown disrespect for holy things, places or people?  
Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holydays through my own fault?  
Have I let myself be distracted at Mass or distracted others?  
Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?  
Have I received Holy Communion without proper reverence, care or thanksgiving?

### For spouses

Have I neglected to foster the warmth of my love and affection for my spouse?  
Have I prolonged disagreements through resentment or failing to apologise when I have been in the wrong?  
Have I mistreated my spouse verbally, emotionally or physically?  
Have I used artificial means of birth control?  
Have I been unfaithful to my spouse in any way?

### For parents

Have I neglected to teach my children to pray?  
Have I neglected the religious education of my children?  
Have I failed to bring my children to Sunday Mass?  
Have I argued with my spouse in front of my children?  
Have I failed to exercise vigilance over what my children read, see on television or on the internet?  
Have I been harsh or overbearing to my children?  
Have I neglected my children’s welfare in any way?

### Sins against myself and others

Have I been impatient, angry or jealous?  
Have I brooded over injuries or refused to forgive?  
Have I taken part in or encouraged abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia or any other means of taking human life?  
Have I been verbally or physically violent to others?  
Have I hurt anyone by speaking badly about them?  
Have I betrayed confidences without good cause or revealed things simply to hurt others?  
Have I judged others rashly?  
Have I been drunk or used illegal drugs?  
Have I driven dangerously or inconsiderately?  
Have I spoken in an obscene way?  
Have I looked at obscene pictures, films or books?  
Have I been involved in any impure behaviour on my own or with someone else?  
Have I been vain, proud, selfish or self-seeking?  
Have I told lies to excuse myself, to hurt others or to make myself look more important?  
Have I stolen anything?  
Have I failed to contribute to the support of the Church in proportion to my means?  
Have I been disobedient, rude or insolent to those in authority over me?  
Have I been harsh, overbearing or sarcastic to those under my authority?  
Have I cheated my employers or employees?  
Have I misused or damaged the property of others?  
Have I set my heart on possessing things?  
Have I given scandal or bad example?  
Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any way?  
Have I been lazy at my work, study or domestic duties?

### It has been a long time...

If it is a long time since your last confession, do not worry—the priest is very used to this. Just tell him that it is a long time (say roughly how long) and he will help you to make a good confession.