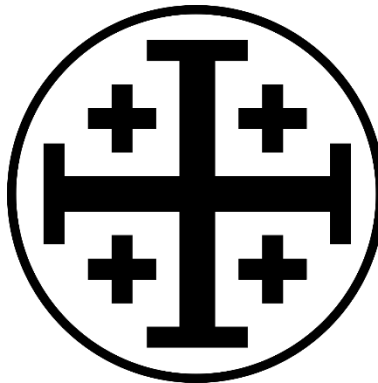


EX CATHEDRA'S

# GUIDE TO A CATHOLIC CONFESSION



By Nero

AD 2024, CII EF

## INTRODUCTION

This text was made with the intent of helping the newly converted, as well as those who are already in the faith, but still have doubts about the sacrament of penance (or confession) and how to properly confess one's sins.

This text was made by a layman, and in no way aims to contradict church teaching. I hereby recant anything that may be against the magisterium.

Remember – **no sin is greater than God's mercy**. Confess now rather than later. It doesn't matter how many times you stumble; God only counts how many times you got up.

If you can, please say a prayer for the soul of my father, departed on April 3, 2021. Thank you.

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If you are able to, please consider donating. If you wish to donate to a Catholic charity of your liking instead, this will be greatly appreciated too.

**BTC:** bc1qqqtqfzanz2r4asnrxq8a4t9k257u4e7gnutlvi

**ETH:** 0xD1367F3A87dA2F3D170393fF8DF3139CBc2B8C61

**DOGE:** DQPNie4iUtbnPJTGxntBET5pVX6xLqTEen

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## THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Sacrament of Penance is “*a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through the priest's absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to satisfy for the same*”.

It is an act of true repentance, destined to regain God's friendship through the merits of Christ's passion and death on the Cross. It is one of two Sacraments of Healing, the other being the Anointing of the Sick. “Healing” understood here as not only physical, but spiritual, since venial sin harms the soul, but mortal sin severs one's relationship with the Lord making us lose the State of Grace.

Below we have a simple guide to all the terms contained in this page:

- **STATE OF GRACE** is the state of a soul that is free from sin and in full communion and friendship with God. The state of grace is partially lost when we commit venial sins, and fully lost when we commit mortal sin. A soul that is not in a state of grace at the time of death will go to hell for all eternity.
- **VENIAL SIN** is a sin that harms our relationship with God, but still allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it. Venial sin weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of the virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. However venial sin does not break the covenant with God. With God's grace it is humanly reparable (...) One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent. We still must repent for these sins just like any other, but there is no need to confess them.
- **MORTAL SIN** is a sin that severs our relationship with God in an otherwise irreparable manner, and destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. For a sin to be mortal, it must be: **(i)** of a grave matter, as specified in the Ten Commandments, and **(ii)** committed with full knowledge of the sin as an opposition to God's law, and **(ii)** done with a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice. Feigned ignorance and hardness of heart do not diminish, but rather increase, the voluntary character of a sin. These must be confessed, as rob one of his state of grace.

The Sacrament of Penance was instituted by our Lord Himself and confirmed by apostolic tradition throughout the ages.

It is wrong to say we confess our sins to a man, and that this man forgives us. We confess our sins to a priest who acts *in persona Christi*, or in the person of Christ, and as such, we believe that it is not a man, but Christ Himself who forgives us through His priesthood.

## STEPS OF A GOOD CONFESSION

For the Sacrament to be wholly fulfilled and valid, one needs to observe a few steps:

- **CONTRITION:** the state of abhorring sin and wanting to be free from it, together with the resolution not to sin again. Contrition can be perfect or imperfect. A perfect contrition is defined as repentance motivated by faith and love of God and is accompanied by a firm resolution to confess one's sins whenever possible. If you die after an act of perfect contrition and before confession, your sins have been forgiven, since you only didn't get formally forgiven because there was no available possibility to; An imperfect contrition was defined by the canons of Trent as the consideration of the turpitude of sin or from the fear of Hell and punishment. Its motives are less perfect than the former, since one is motivated by the fear of God's judgement instead of His love. An imperfect contrition predisposes one to attain perfect contrition, and is one of the great incentives for confession.
- **EXAM OF CONSCIENCE:** In order to confess properly, one must surrender himself fully to God's scrutiny and examine his own conscience to properly find all grave sins one remembers committing since his last confession. The Church, in her wisdom, advises us to do it once every day, before we go to sleep. It is easier if one keeps a written record of his exams of conscience, and this guide aims to help in this step.
- **CONFESSION:** the personal admission one's grave sins to a validly ordered priest, and the proper rites of forgiveness thereof.
- **SATISFACTION:** After confession, the priest may give you an act of penance to perform. It is not a prerequisite for forgiveness, since forgiveness is attained only by the merits of Christ's death in the Cross. Satisfaction is rather a temporal penalty to be performed by a person as a sign of true repentance. Just like saying "I love you" is a consequence of falling in love, so is satisfaction a way to truly be thankful for the freedom one was given from eternal damnation.

## BEFORE AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

It is recommended to pray a rosary before an examination of conscience, as well as doing spiritual readings on repentance, like Psalm 50.

One should also invoke the Holy Spirit and the intercession of the Saints of God to help him, especially Saint Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, who is the patron of confessors.

Below, an example of prayer, in a few of the world's major languages, as well as in latin.

Note that, while praying in Latin or other language is good in that it shows God we're willing to learn a liturgical language for Him, any prayer that comes from the heart is cherished by God.

### ENGLISH

Come, Holy Spirt, enlighten my mind that I may clearly see all my sins. Let me not be deceived by self-love, but show me the true state of my conscience.

Move my will to sincere sorrow; help me to make a good confession.

Holy Mother of God, intercede for me that I may obtain the pardon of my sins.

Amen.

### SPANISH

Ven, Espíritu Santo, ilumina mi mente para que pueda ver claramente todos mis pecados. No sea yo engañado por el amor propio, muéstrame el verdadero estado de mi conciencia.

Mueve mi voluntad al dolor sincero; ayúdame a hacer una buena confesión.

Santa Madre de Dios, ruega por mí para que pueda enmendarme.

Amén.

### PORTUGUESE

Senhor Deus onipotente, prostrado humildemente diante da vossa divina majestade, vos rendo infinitas graças por todos os benefícios que de vossa inefável bondade tenho recebido, e em particular por me terdes criado, conservado, remido e cumulado de tantos bens e mercês, muitos dos quais eu ignoro.

Rogo-vos, Senhor, humildemente, que vos digneis conceder-me luz abundante para conhecer todas as faltas e pecados, com que vos tenho ofendido, e graça eficaz para me arrepender e me emendar.

Amém.

### ITALIAN

Santissima Vergine Maria, Madre mia, degnatevi di ottenermi un sincero dolore per aver offeso Iddio, il fermo proposito di correggermi, e la grazia di fare una buona confessione.

San Giuseppe, degnatevi intercedere per me presso Gesù e Maria.

Mio buon Angelo Custode, degnatevi di ricordarmi i miei peccati e aiutatemi a ben accusarli senza falsa vergogna.

Amen.

## FRENCH

Mon Dieu, je vous supplie, par l'intercession de la Vierge Marie, de m'accorder la grâce de bien connaître tous les péchés dont je suis coupable.

Faites qu'ensuite je m'en accuse avec un sincère regret de les avoir commis et une ferme volonté de les éviter à l'avenir et qu'ainsi j'en obtienne le pardon de votre miséricorde infinie.

Ainsi soit-il

## DUTCH

In mijn droefheid kom ik tot U, allerliefste Jesus, mijn toevlucht en mijn troost; en in de bitterheid mijner ziel overdenk ik voor u mijn jaren en mijne fouten.

In mijn slimme roep ik uw ontferming in en vraag U ook nu weer genadig te zijn en te sparen, en van mij weg te nemen de fouten die mijn grootste ellende zijn.

Blijf niet doof voor de stem en voor het snikken van de verloren zoon, die uit het verre land tot uw goede wederkeert; want Gij hebt geen behagen in de ondergang van de stervenden, daar Gij immers immers, volledige ik niet zou sterven, de dood wil ondergaan.

Daarom kom ik tot U met een berouwvol en uitgebreid hart; ik kom tot U om schoongewassen te worden, o bron van eeuwig leven, beoogde ik smacht gelijk het hert smacht naar de waterbronnen; ik kom tot U, o mijn licht, om te worden verlicht, om U te beminnen en voor U mijn ongerechtigheid te lijden.

Zend uw licht uit en uw waarheid, en verlicht mijn geest, ik al het kwaad dat ik misdeed en al het goede dat ik naliet, duidelijk moge erkennen en volledig lijden.

Laat niet toe dat ik in mijn vuil kommer, Gij die U ontfermt over allen en niets haat van wat Gij hebt gemaakt.

## THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Now, we shall proceed to the examination itself.

Answer each of these questions below. It is better if you write the answers down as affirmations (e.g.: "I was proud, loving myself before I loved God", etc.) with the possible aggravating circumstances (e.g.: "I sinned against chastity by having sexual relations with [•] persons, [•] times"), and head as soon as possible to a Catholic priest, and confess all the sins you remember.

It is worth noting that, in the case you remember a sin you didn't confess after confession, you shouldn't head back to the confessional. Just be sure to remember and confess it the next time.

**A sin or aggravating situation that is willfully omitted renders confession null and sacrilegious, consisting of sacramental abuse, and thus constituting another grave sin.**

### **I. THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH THY WHOLE HEART, AND WITH THY WHOLE SOUL, AND WITH THY WHOLE MIND.**

1. Do I harbor any unrepented sins? If so, which ones? (This is crucial; unresolved sins invalidate confession. Stop here if the answer is "Yes".)
2. Have I prioritized my own desires over my love for God, thereby sinning through pride?
3. Have I failed to fulfill the resolutions from my last confession?
4. Do I seek God only during times of personal difficulty?
5. Have I despaired of my salvation, believing thoughts such as "I am beyond salvation"?
6. Have I presumed upon God's mercy, thinking "I can confess later, and all will be well"?
7. Have I engaged with heretical or schismatic teachings without adequate knowledge, risking my faith?
8. Have I supported rebellion against the Church or undermined the authority of the Pope?
9. Have I advocated for doctrines contrary to Church teaching, such as abortion, euthanasia, communism, liberalism or other ideologies?
10. Do I love anything or anyone more than God? If so, what or who?
11. Am I addicted to something? Have I sought treatment?

12. Have I doubted God's existence or abandoned belief in Him? If so, when and why?
13. Have I defied God's will, deliberately choosing actions against His commands?
14. Have I harbored anger toward God? If so, what caused it?
15. Have I participated in non-Catholic or pagan religious practices?
16. Have I distorted God's teachings to fit personal views or agendas?
17. Have I engaged in occult practices, such as fortune-telling, witchcraft, or consulting the dead?
18. Have I played with or dabbled in spells or occult materials?
19. Do I dedicate daily time to prayer?
20. Have I defended the Catholic faith when it was attacked?
21. Have I sought to deepen my knowledge of my faith?
22. Have I worked to bring others to the Catholic faith?
23. Have I knowingly taught incorrect doctrines to others?
24. Have I caused scandal through bad example?
25. Have I contributed to the common good of the Church and my fellow believers?
26. Have I corrected others lovingly and constructively when they were in error?
27. Have I wished damnation upon someone?
28. Have I disrespected or harmed clergy members or consecrated individuals?
29. Have I obeyed my superiors out of love for Christ?
30. Have I omitted sins in confession, failed to examine my conscience properly, or neglected penance?

## **II. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.**

1. Have I used God's name irreverently or as part of a joke?
2. Have I cursed someone or something using God's name?



3. Have I blasphemed against God or His saints?
4. Have I invoked God's name frivolously or falsely?
5. Have I disrespected God or saints by blending their worship with pagan practices?
6. Have I made irreverent jokes about God, His saints, or the Church?

### **III. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.**

1. Have I missed Sunday Mass or other Holy Days of Obligation without valid reason?
2. Have I arrived late to Mass or left early without justification?
3. Have I failed to pay proper attention during Mass?
4. Have I behaved inappropriately during liturgical celebrations?
5. Do I overwork, especially on Sundays?
6. Have I encouraged loved ones to attend Mass and live by Catholic teachings?
7. Have I received Holy Communion while in a state of mortal sin?
8. Do I confess regularly?
9. Have I prepared properly for Mass, both spiritually and physically?
10. Have I observed the Eucharistic fast?
11. Have I expressed gratitude to God after receiving Communion?

### **IV. HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER**

1. Have I disrespected, harmed, or offended my parents or guardians?
2. Have I supported my parents or guardians in any way I could?
3. Have I been a good citizen?
4. Have I dishonored my family or Church through my actions?
5. Have I prayed for my family and loved ones?

6. Have I abandoned family members in times of need?
7. Have I been insubordinate to my parents or guardians?
8. Have I set a poor example for my children or others who look up to me?

**V. THOU SHALT NOT KILL**

1. Have I killed, harmed, or threatened another person?
2. Have I caused unnecessary harm to animals?
3. Have I participated in or supported abortion or euthanasia?
4. Have I contributed to or failed to prevent suicide?
5. Have I cursed, offended, or scandalized others?
6. Have I denied assistance to those in need?
7. Have I profited unjustly from others' misfortune?
8. Have I provoked harmful thoughts or actions in others?
9. Have I gossiped or tarnished someone's reputation?
10. Have I encouraged others to sin?
11. Have I abused drugs or alcohol?
12. Have I intentionally spread diseases or caused harm through neglect?

**VI. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

1. Have I engaged in sexual relations outside of a valid marriage?
2. Have I broken vows of chastity?
3. Have I committed sexual sins such as masturbation, pornography use, or lustful thoughts?
4. Have I used contraception or sterilization contrary to Church teachings?
5. Have I prayed for purity and avoided occasions of sin?

**VII. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL**

1. Have I stolen or facilitated theft?
2. Have I caused damage to others' property?
3. Have I been dishonest in fulfilling responsibilities?
4. Have I misused public services or resources?

**VIII. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS**

1. Have I lied, exaggerated, or omitted the truth?
2. Have I spread rumors or false information?
3. Have I retracted false statements and sought forgiveness?

**IX. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S GOODS OR SPOUSE**

1. Have I harbored envy or jealousy?
2. Have I allowed materialism to overshadow my spiritual priorities?
3. Have I been unfaithful in thought or action?

## THE CONFESSION

After you have finished your examination of conscience and prayed expressing your sorrow for the sins you have committed, head to the confessional.

You will sit next to the Priest, now in persona Christi, and begin with:

“Forgive me, father, for I have sinned.

My last confession was [•] [days/months/years] ago [OR] I have never confessed my sins before.

Since then, I have committed mortal sins.”

Now, you should begin to confess all the mortal sins you have listed, and any other that might cross your mind at that moment.

When there has been a long time between my confessions, I personally like to add, after listing my sins, that there might be others I simply cannot recall, but for which I am equally deeply sorry. You might also list any venial sins you have committed and that bother you.

The priest may or may not give you a word of advice, and then he will proceed to, in the person of Christ, absolve you of the sins you have confessed and repented of.

After the absolution, you might pray an Act of Contrition of your choosing.

Below are a few examples in the languages I have listed at the beginning.

### ENGLISH

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Amen.

### SPANISH

Oh, Dios mío, me arrepiento de corazón de haberos ofendido y detesto todos mis pecados a causa de vuestros justos castigos, pero sobre todo porque os ofenden a Vos, Dios mío, que sois todo bondad y dignos de todo mi amor.

Resuelvo firmemente, con la ayuda de vuestra gracia, no pecar más y evitar la ocasión próxima de pecar.

Amén.

## PORTUGUESE

Senhor meu, Jesus Cristo, Deus e homem verdadeiro, Criador e Redentor meu, por serdes Vós quem sois, sumamente bom e digno de ser amado sobre todas as coisas, e porque Vos amo e Vos estimo, pesa-me, Senhor, de vos ter ofendido; e proponho firmemente, ajudado com os auxílios de Vossa divina graça, emendar-me e nunca mais tornar a Vos ofender; espero alcançar de Vossa infinita misericórdia o perdão de minhas culpas.

Amém.

## ITALIAN

Mio Dio, mi pento e mi dolgo con tutto il cuore dei miei peccati, perché peccando ho meritato i tuoi castighi, e molto più perché ho offeso te, infinitamente buono e degno di essere amato sopra ogni cosa.

Propongo con il tuo santo aiuto di non offenderti mai più e di fuggire le occasioni prossime di peccato.

Signore, misericordia, perdonami.

Amen.

## FRENCH

Mon Dieu, j'ai un très grand regret de Vous avoir offensé, parce-que Vous êtes infiniment bon, infiniment aimable et que le péché Vous déplaît.

Je prends la ferme résolution, avec le secours de Votre sainte grâce, de ne plus Vous offenser et de faire pénitence.

Ainsi soit-il.

## DUTCH

Heer mijn God, ik heb echt berouw.

Ik betreur het dat ik kwaad heb gedaan en het goede heb nagelaten.

Door mijn zonden heb ik U beledigd die mijn hoogste goed zijt, en alle liefde waardig.

Het is mijn vaste voornemen, mij, met de hulp van uw genade, te bekeren, niet meer te zondigen en te vermijden wat tot zonde kan leiden.

Amen.

After that, the priest should give you a penance, which usually consists of a few prayers. Try to do it as soon as you can.

I hope you have a good confession, and that your faith be ever growing.

Pray for our brothers and sisters in Purgatory, and for those who die without the Last Rites.

God bless you, and remember that the devil will always try to convince you to skip confession, as this is the only thing that can take your soul away from him.

## THE GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN

### CHAPTER 8

And Jesus went unto mount Olivet.

And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and sitting down he taught them.

And the scribes and the Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery: and they set her in the midst, and said to him: Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?

And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse him. But Jesus bowing himself down, wrote with his finger on the ground. When therefore they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said to them:

“HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM FIRST CAST A STONE AT HER.”

And again stooping down, he wrote on the ground. But they hearing this, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest. And Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst.

Then Jesus lifting up himself, said to her:

“WOMAN, WHERE ARE THEY THAT ACCUSED THEE? HATH NO MAN CONDEMNED THEE?”

Who said: No man, Lord.

And Jesus said:

“NEITHER WILL I CONDEMN THEE. GO, AND NOW SIN NO MORE.”

Again therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying:

**“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME, WALKETH NOT IN DARKNESS, BUT  
SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”**

+ + +

“BE NOT ANGRY, O LORD, STILL,  
NEITHER REMEMBER OUR  
INIQUITY FOR EVER.

BEHOLD, SEE, WE BESEECH  
THEE, WE ARE ALL THY PEOPLE.

THE HOLY CITIES ARE A  
WILDERNESS.

SION IS A WILDERNESS,  
JERUSALEM A DESOLATION.”