



A Brief Guide to Confession

The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance

Our Lady Help of Christians

Roman Catholic Parish Church

Luton | Bedfordshire | LU1 3AG

Examination of Conscience – Before Confession

An Examination of Conscience is a thoughtful review of one's thoughts, words, and actions aimed at identifying sins committed against God's commandments and the teachings of the Church. It is intended to prepare you for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

Confession

The penitent (the person confessing) should begin their confession with the sign of the cross:

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And then start confession by saying:

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

It is [state the length of time] since my last confession.

You may briefly tell the priest your 'state of life,' to help him understand your situation: e.g. 'I am at school' or 'I am a wife and mother'.

And these are my sins ...

The penitent admits their sins to a priest in a confidential setting. This confession is made orally. It is important for the penitent to be as honest and thorough as possible, confessing all mortal sins in number and kind. Venial sins (less serious sins) should also be confessed, but they do not necessarily need to be confessed in every confession.

When you have finished your confession, say:

I am sorry for these sins and for all my sins that I cannot now remember.

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.

The priest will then assign a penance. This is usually a prayer or series of prayers; but can also include acts of charity or specific actions to make amends for the sins committed. The penance is meant to express repentance and repair the damage caused by sin, that expresses your sorrow and your desire to put things right and live a new life.

The priest will then ask you to make an Act of Contrition.

Act of Contrition

You say one you know, or use the following:

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you; and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.

Absolution

Finally, the priest extends absolution to the penitent, which means that the person's sins are forgiven by God. The priest says a prayer of absolution, which includes the words:

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

The priest may add some other prayers as well. As you listen to the words of forgiveness you may make the sign of the cross with the priest. If the priest closes by saying

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good," you should answer, "**For His mercy endures forever. Amen.**"

Penance – After Confession

After leaving the confession, the penitent is expected to complete the penance given by the priest.

After the penance is completed, the following prayers may be used as an act of thanksgiving:

Merciful Lord, with a pure heart I thank you for taking away my sins. Let your Holy Spirit guide my life so that my soul may bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Amen.

Or

O Lord! I abandon my past to your mercy, my present to your love, and my future to your providence! Amen.

For more information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the OCIA, visit: <https://www.olhc.uk/Confession.html>

