

# PREPARATION FOR HOLY CONFESSION



The gift of God's forgiveness is received through private prayer, corporate worship, the disciplines of prayer and fasting, penitential services and above all the sacrament of Holy Confession.

The value of Holy Confession is twofold. First, through this sacramental act of the ordained priest and the Christian believer we have the assurance of divine forgiveness, according to the words of Christ (John 20:23). Secondly, Holy Confession provides the opportunity to talk about one's deep concerns, to receive counsel and to be encouraged toward spiritual growth, all of which are universally recognized as extremely beneficial to personal life.

We confess our sins to God and the power of forgiveness is God's. However, the first of God's forgiveness, although assured, is not magical. It does not automatically spare us from spiritual struggle, the continued vigilance against evil and the unceasing warfare against sin. Holy Confession will bear fruits in the Spirit only when the believer hates evil, utterly rejects sin, and patiently cultivates positive habits of the life of Christ. "So, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ Jesus. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness but yield yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life (Romans 6:11,13).

How can one prepare for Holy Confessions? Preparation for Holy Confession is a prayerful examination of feelings, thoughts, words, acts, attitudes, habits, values, priorities, goals, direction, and way of life. This prayerful self-examination includes not only the personal religious life, but also family relationships, social activities, job conduct, business dealings, political commitments and even recreational pursuits, because our entire existence should be lived in under the light of the Holy Spirit is not to condemn

ourselves, but to affirm our true selves in Christ who has given us access to God's mercy and forgiveness and who has taught us to live for God's glory.

Pray and think about your confession over several days. Ask God to help you perceive your sins and to make a thorough confession of them. Reflect on the Ten Commandments as an Examination of Conscience.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

**I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods before me.**

Has God been the source, center, and hope of my life? Have I put myself, others, or things before God? Have I failed to trust in God's existence, love, and mercy? Have I failed to pray to God, to worship Him and to thank Him for his blessings? Have I tried to serve God and keep His Commandments faithfully? Have I murmured or complained against God in adversity? Have I praised and glorified God through my words and deeds? Have I valued anyone or anything above God? Have I given to anyone or anything the love, honor and worship that belongs to God alone? Have I made an idol of any person, idea, occupation, or thing?

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

Have I blasphemed God's holy name in any way? Have I sworn a false oath? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise? Have I entered into an agreement, promise or contract against God's law? Have I cursed or used foul language?

**Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.**

Have I worshiped regularly on Sundays and major feast days and have I helped others to do the same? Have I worked unnecessarily on Sundays or major feast days or cause others to do the same? Have I spent the Lord's Day in a wholesome and edifying way?

**Honor your Father and Mother. *For Children:***

Have I loved and respected my parents as I should? Have I neglected them or failed to help them? Have I disobeyed them, deceived them, or caused them pain by my words or deeds? Have I treated all my family members with patience and love? ***For Parents:*** Have I nagged or scolded habitually? Have I punished

unnecessarily or too severely? Shown favoritism? Have I neglected the religious training of the children? Have I given bad example? Have I interfered with their religious vocation? ***For Parents toward each other:*** Have I been thoughtless? neglectful? indifferent? deceiving? faithless? rude? quarrelsome? abusive? domineering? Have I refused proper support? ***For Superiors in Authority:*** Have I been unfair? Shown favoritism? Have I acted unkindly? Have I violated the rights of others? Have I given those subject to me the example of a good Christian life?

**Thou shall not kill.** Have I caused the harm, injury, or death of anyone? Have I wished my own or anyone's harm or death? Have I been cruel to animals or destroyed any life unnecessarily? Have I wished evil, temporal, or eternal, upon another?

**You shall not commit adultery**

**You shall not covert thy neighbor's wife.** Have I spoken immodestly in the hearing of others? Have I committed any immodest or immoral acts alone or with others? Have I enticed others by word, dress, or behavior? Have I caused others to commit immoral acts? Have I committed immoral acts in my heart?

**You shall not steal.** Have I taken anything that was not mine, from anyone or from anywhere? Have I cheated anyone? Have I caused others to steal or cheat? Have I tried to find the owner of lost things I have found? Have I damaged or destroyed anything that belonged to another? Have I defrauded anyone of rightful wages? Have I paid my debts? Have I given to the poor and to philanthropic causes in proportion to my means?

**You shall not covet thy neighbor's goods.** Have I looked with envy, jealousy or hatred toward the possession, talents, or achievements of others? Have I desired the downfall or loss of others out of evil intent that I might benefit? Have I grieved that God has bestowed greater blessings on others

than on me? Have I kept articles that were found, though the owner was known? Have I accepted pay for wasted time or poor work?

**You shall not bear false witness.** Have I given false testimony against anyone? Have I spoken evil, told lies or spread rumors about anyone? Have I disclosed to anyone the sins and faults of another? Have I made careless statements or done anything else to harm the name and reputation of another? Have I engaged in idle gossip?