

A Scriptural Guide to Confession
Written by Rev. H.T. Burke

“He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”(Prv.28:13)

“As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*”(Jn.20:21-23)

“They praised God for giving such authority to men.” (Matt.9:8) Christ gave the power to forgive sins in His name to the Apostles (Jn.20:21-23,Matt.9:6-8), and their successors. To go to the priest is to go directly to Christ because the priest acts *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ), in God’s name (Acts 5:5). The individual priest we confess to is the visible priest. Christ is the invisible priest who is present and acts through his human priest (On God’s mercy read Lk.15,Jn8:1-11,Ezk.33).

Confession Sequence: 1.Make the Sign of cross 2.State how long since your last confession. 3.Confess sins according to kind and number. It is a sin to deliberately conceal any mortal sins!(Acts5:5) 4. Receive penance and advice. 5.Pray an act of contrition(Ps.51). 6. Receive absolution. 7. Go and do your penance (2Sam.12:13,14, 1Chr.21:8-13). *If you forget how to go to confession simply tell the priest and he will help.*

Act of Contrition

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

The Three Conditions For Mortal Sin:

1. Serious matter- the thought, word, action or omission must be seriously wrong or believed to be. (Lk.12:47,48, Gen.20:1-8) 2. Sufficient reflection- the person must be mindful of the serious wrong (having reflected on it before its done) 3. Full consent of the will (freely choose to commit the sin).

The Two Great Commandments:

I. “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul and with all your mind.”(Deut.6:5,Mt22:37-39), *Corresponds to the first three of the Ten Commandments
II. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”(Lev.18:9, Mt.22:37-39) *Corresponds to the last seven.

An Examination of Conscience with The Ten Commandments (Ex20:1-17,Deut.5:6-21).

1. You shall have no false gods. Did I worship the true God? Did I pray everyday? Did I give greater love to anyone or anything else? Did I put faith in a false religion, occult ideas or astrology?

2. You shall not take God's name in vain. Did I use God's name only with reverence?

3. Keep the Sabbath Holy. Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault (Not for illness or lack of transportation)? Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin? (1Cor.11:27-29) Did I deliberately not pay attention at Mass? Did I deliberately arrive late or leave early? Did I abstain from unnecessary physical labor on Sunday? Did I contribute to the Church according to my means?

4. Honor your father and mother. Did I love, help, and obey my parents and other authorities?

5. You shall not kill. Did I take care of my body or abuse drugs/alcohol (Gal. 5:21)? Did I unjustly injure others physically or verbally(Mt5:21-26)? Did I forgive all who injured me? Did I promote or have an abortion (Lk-1:15,41,44,Ps.139:13,Is.13:18)? Did I mutilate my body through surgical sterilization?

6. You shall not commit adultery. Am I guilty of sins against purity such as: adultery, fornication (premarital sex)(Gal.5:16-24,1Cor.6:15-20, Eph.5:5,6, Mt.15:19, Rev.22:15), impure thoughts, pornography (Ps.101:3, Matt.5:27, Ezek.16:25), immodest Dress (Is.3:16-24,1 Tim.2:9,10,1Pt.3:1-6), masturbation, homosexual acts (Gen.19:1-29,Rom.1:24-27, 1Cor.6:10, 1Tim.1:10), and contraception (Gen.1:28,38:8-10,Ps.127:3-5,Gen.38:8-10)? Did I marry outside the Church? Am I avoiding impure TV and media?

7. You shall not steal. Have I stolen? Have I returned the item or made restitution?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Have I lied, engaged in calumny (telling the faults of someone that are untrue) or gossip, detraction(unnecessarily revealing someone's true faults)?

9.You shall not covet your neighbors wife. Have I willfully engaged in impure thoughts (Mt5:27,28)?

10. You shall not covet your neighbors goods. Have I sought to be detached from this world's wealth (Mt19:16-30,Lk.6:20-26,12:13-31,Jam.5:1-6)? Have I given to the poor (Mt.25:31-46,1Jn.3:17,Jam.2:15)?

Remember to examine your conscience before confession. (Written by Rev. H.T. Burke).