

# Celebrating the Sacrament of Confession

## Part One

### A Brief Examination of Conscience

#### **I. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.**

- Have I been more concerned with what people think of me than what God thinks of me? Have I been impious by ridiculing sacred things or rites? Have I engaged in superstitious practices of any kind? Have I been indifferent about the Lord's teachings proclaimed in the scriptures and the teachings of His Church?

#### **II. Thou Shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.**

- Have I always spoken with reverence about God, the saints and holy things? Do I use the name of the Lord often in Prayer?

#### **III. Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath Day.**

- Have I attended Mass on each Sunday and Holy Day of obligation? Have I seen Sunday as a day of rest set aside for the Lord or do I treat it like just any other day? Do I engage in unnecessary work on Sunday or pressure others to do so?

#### **IV. Honor thy father and mother.**

- Do I show respect and love for my parents? If I no longer live with my parents, do I call or write them often to show my love and concern? What about other lawful superiors and authorities in my life, do I honor, respect and obey them as I ought?

#### **V. Thou shalt not kill.**

– Do I show reverence and respect for human life from conception to death? Have I in any way approved of violent or vengeful behavior? Have I nursed hatred in my heart for others? Have I endangered the lives of others by reckless behavior? Have I endangered the spiritual life of anyone by encouraging them to commit serious sins or by giving bad example?

## **VI. Thou shalt not commit adultery**

- Have I entertained impure or lustful thoughts? Have I committed impure actions either with myself or someone else? Have I tempted others to impurity by immodest dress or suggestive talk? Have I ridiculed or down played the virtue of chastity? Have I intentionally looked at indecent magazines, movies or pictures?

## **VII. Thou shalt not steal.**

– Have I unjustly and intentionally damaged the property of another person? Have I cheated in any way or engaged in dishonest practices? Have I made illegal photocopies, audio, or video recordings? If I am an employer, Have I paid a just wage? If I am an employee, do I give an honest day's work for my wage? As far as possible, do I pay my debts in a timely manner?

## **VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.**

- Have I lied about others? Do I have a care for the good name and reputation of others or do I often endanger it by gossip and the spreading of rumors? In general, am I a truthful person? Have I rashly judged others? Have I told secrets about others that I am bound to keep?

## **IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife**

- Have I entertained sexual desires or thoughts about someone who is not my spouse? Do I love my own spouse and thank the Lord for him or her?

## **X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.**

- Do I envy the success of others. Am I angry that others seem to have more than I? Have I sought the things of earth more than those of Heaven?

**Part Two:  
The Celebration of the Sacrament**

The penitent sits or kneels, makes the sign of the cross and says,

**Bless me Father, for I have sinned  
My last confession was \_\_ (days, months, years) ago.**

Then the penitent tells the priest the sins committed in the last confession. Usually this is concluded by this or a similar phrase:

**For these, and other sins which I cannot recall  
at this time, I ask pardon and forgiveness.**

Now the priest will offer some advice or encouragement to the person and then assign a small penance to be performed. He will then ask for an act of contrition. The act of contrition on the back page is commonly recited but others may be used.

**An Act of Contrition**

**Oh My God, I am heartily sorry  
for having offended you by my sins.  
I detest all my sins  
not only because I fear  
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 my penance  
and to amend my life.  
Amen.**

The priest then gives the absolution by extending his hand over the penitent and saying these words:

God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace and I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest will often bid the penitent farewell by saying,

"Go in Peace"