

Seventh and Tenth Commandments Continued

Have I paid my debts or “played the system” to avoid fulfilling my obligations? Have I cheated my company? Have I given a full day’s work for a full day’s pay? Have I paid a fair wage to anyone who works for me? Have I been faithful to my promises and contracts? Have I given or accepted bribes? Have I allowed work to get in the way of my obligations to God or my family? Do I generously share my goods with the needy? Do I use my time, talents, and treasure to help my parish, the diocese, and the greater Church?

Eighth Commandment

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex 20:16)

Have my lies caused spiritual or material harm to others? Have I told lies about anybody (calumny)? Have I injured others by revealing true hidden faults? Did I commit perjury? Have I been guilty of refusing to testify to the innocence of another because of fear or selfishness? Have I engaged in uncharitable talk/gossip? Have I encouraged the spread of scandal? Am I guilty of any fraud? Did I insult or tease others to hurt them? Have I falsely flattered others? Have I made rash judgments about others? Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

Other Sins

Did I intentionally refuse to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions? Have I fulfilled my obligation to go to confession at least once a year and of going worthily to Holy Communion at least during the Easter season? Did I fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday? Did I abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?

These materials have been adapted from the Diocese of Fall River’s “Be Reconciled to God” Initiative in 2009, for the Diocese of Arlington with permission of Fr. Roger Landry

How to go to Confession

*The penitent and the priest begin with the sign of the Cross, saying:
In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

The priest urges the penitent to have confidence in God with these or similar words: May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow.

The priest may read or say a passage from Sacred Scripture after which the penitent then states: Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (however many days, weeks, months or years) since my last confession. These are my sins:

The penitent then states his or her sins.

For the confession to be valid, the penitent must confess all of the mortal sins he or she is aware of having committed since the last confession, be sorry for them, and have a firm purpose of amendment to not commit the same sins in the future.

When finished say: I am sorry for these and all of my sins.

After this, the priest will generally give some advice to the penitent and impose a penance. Then he will ask the penitent to say the act of contrition.

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.

After this the priest will absolve the penitent in the following 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 give 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.

The penitent makes the sign of the Cross and answers: Amen

The priest will then dismiss the penitent. The penitent should then immediately try to fulfill the prescribed penance.



Examination of Conscience for Adults



Preparing for the Sacrament of Penance

Ask for the Holy Spirit’s help to examine your conscience well by prayerfully reviewing your conduct in light of the commandments and the example of Christ.

The directions below assist a thorough examination:

- Tell the priest the specific kinds of sins you have committed to the best of your ability. For example, how many times you have committed them since your last good confession.
- Avoid generalizations and inform the priest of any relevant circumstances in which you committed your sins.
- Be sure to confess all mortal sins. Confession of venial sins is very helpful for avoiding sin, especially mortal sin, and growing in holiness.
- Ask the priest if you are not sure whether a sin is mortal or venial. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be met: “Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent.” (CCC 1857)
- Always tell the priest your state of life: married or single, consecrated, priest, or religious.

"To those who have been far away from the Sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love, I make this appeal: Come back to this source of grace. Do not be afraid! Christ Himself is waiting for you. He will heal you, and you will be at peace with God." St. John Paul II

Examination of Conscience

Catholics have always found it profitable to examine their consciences in light of the Ten Commandments. Penitents are encouraged to ponder them in their fullest meaning and prayerfully review their conduct.

First Commandment

"I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before Me." (Ex 20:2,3)

Have I loved God above all things, or have I put other things such as work, money, drugs, TV, fame, pleasure, or other people ahead of Him? Have I made time for God each day in prayer? Have I denied my faith in God, or endangered it by occult practices Ouija boards, palm reading, astrology, or reading materials or programs that oppose the Catholic faith and morals? Am I whole-hearted in accepting and following God's teaching? Do I only pick and choose the convenient parts of His message? Have I tried to learn and understand my faith better? Have I denied my faith before others? Have I been willing to affirm, defend and practice my faith in public and not just in private? Did I despair of or presume God's mercy?

Second Commandment

"You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain." (Ex 20:7)

Do I love and have reverence for God's Name? Have I offended God by blasphemy, cursing, or treating His Name carelessly? Do I try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions I have made towards God, especially those of my Baptism and Confirmation? Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, the Church, holy things, or holy people?

Third Commandment

"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day." (Ex 20:8)

Did I willfully miss Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation, unless I am sick or in case of an emergency? Have I fully, consciously and actively participated in Holy Mass or just gone through the motions? Have I given my full attention to the Word of God, or have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin? Did I leave Mass early (after Communion) rather than waiting for the final blessing? Did I do work on Sunday that was not necessary? Have I used Sunday as a day for acts of love towards God, my family and those in need, or is it part of a regular "weekend"?

Fourth Commandment

"Honor your father and your mother." (Ex 20:12)

Did I neglect my duties to my spouse, children, parents, or siblings? Have I failed to be grateful for my parents' sacrifices for me? Have I disrespected my family members, or treated them with a lack of affection? Do I accept correction with humility? Did I cause tension and fights in my family? Have I cared for my aged and infirm relatives? Have I provided a Christian education for my children through Catholic school or religious instruction? Do I inspire them by my virtue or scandalize them by my failings? When I have disciplined my children, did I do so with charity and prudence? Have I taught my children to listen and pray to God about their mission to bring about the Kingdom of God here on earth and whether God may be calling them to the priesthood or religious life?

Fifth Commandment

"You shall not kill." (Ex 20:13)

Did I kill or try to harm someone physically? Did I attempt suicide or entertain thoughts of taking my life? Did I have an abortion, or encourage or help someone else to have one? Have I participated in abortion through my silence, or financial support for persons or organizations that promote it? Have I voted for candidates who support abortion without a grave reason? Have I participated in or supported so-called "mercy killing" (euthanasia)?

Fifth Commandment Continued

Have I abused my spouse, children, or others in any way? Have I mutilated or harmed my body? Have I borne hatred or withheld forgiveness? Have I been reckless behind the wheel to put my life and others in danger? Have I neglected my health? Did I give bad example through drug abuse, drinking alcohol to excess, fighting, or quarreling? Have I easily become angry or lost my temper?

Sixth and Ninth Commandments

"You shall not commit adultery." (Ex 20:14)

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." (Ex 20:17)

Have I remembered that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or desires? Did I deliberately look at sexually explicit TV programs, computer sites, videos, pictures, or movies? Did I commit impure acts with myself (masturbation) or with others through adultery (sex with a married person), fornication (premarital sex), or homosexual activity? Have I been faithful to my husband or wife in my heart and conduct with others? Have I sinned through the use of contraception, contraceptive sterilization, or in-vitro fertilization? Have I lustfully touched or kissed another person? Have I treated others in my deeds or thoughts as objects? Have I been an occasion of sin for others by acting or dressing immodestly? Am I sacramentally married according to the laws of the Church? Did I advise or encourage anyone to marry outside the Church?

Seventh and Tenth Commandments

"You shall not steal." (Ex 20:15)

"You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." (Ex 20:17)

Have I been greedy or envious? Have I made acquiring material possessions the focus of my life? Am I inordinately attached to the things of this world? Did I steal, cheat, help, or encourage others to steal or to keep stolen goods? Did I receive stolen goods? Have I returned or made restitution for things I have stolen? Did I damage others' property without acknowledging it and repairing it?