

Confession Guide for Elderly Persons



Who this Guide is intended for

“I don’t know what sins to confess. I hardly even leave the house!” If this thought has ever crossed your mind as you waited in the confession line, this guide is for you.

Perhaps you aren’t committing the same sins you were when you were younger, but this doesn’t mean that your spiritual work is finished. The Lord calls us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).

This guide is designed for those whose lives have begun to slow down a bit. It provides an examination of conscience that includes sins which are more easily overlooked. If you are interested in a confession guide aimed at a more general audience, please see another guide in this pamphlet series called *Confession Guide for Adults*.

Prayer before Confession

Come Holy Spirit. Please help me to see the ways that I have offended you, to be sorry for my sins, and to receive your healing grace. Amen.

Examination of Conscience

- Have I deliberately withheld a mortal sin from my past in a prior confession?
- Do I prepare well for Mass or do I just read the bulletin while I wait?
- If I am homebound and Holy Communion is brought to me, do I prepare my heart beforehand to receive the Lord or do I just watch TV?
- If I can't make it to Mass because of health or weather, do I still set aside time to make Sunday holy and prayerful?
- Do I use excuses to avoid going to Mass and yet still go out to restaurants with friends?
- Have I avoided reading or listening to the bible?
- Have I neglected to try to learn more about my faith?
- Have I stopped trying to grow deeper in my prayer life?
- Do I spend time with God in prayer or just "say prayers"?
- Have I failed to pray regularly for my loved ones, especially for those who have left the faith?
- Have I failed to pray regularly for the Church? For my parish community? For those in need?
- Have I done what I can to pass the Catholic faith on to my grandchildren or others?
- Have I been complacent, for example, by ignoring the opportunity to volunteer at my parish or to sign-up for an adoration hour?
- Have I refused to adhere to a Church teaching or told another that it's not a big deal?
- Have I failed to be grateful to God for my life?
- Have I failed to show gratitude to those who help me?
- Have I been disobedient to those who take care of me?
- Have I allowed myself to get excessively angry?
- Have I been envious of the health or wealth of others?
- Have I indulged in self-pity?
- Have I given myself over to bitterness or negativity?

- Have I grumbled or complained in word or thought?
- Have I failed to accept God's will for me?
- Have I failed to trust God by excessive worrying?
- Have I held on to a grudge from a long time ago?
- Have I withheld forgiveness?
- Have I looked down upon others?
- Have I judged others just because they are younger?
- Have I criticized my pastor or Church leadership in unfair or unconstructive ways?
- Have I been impatient or demanding?
- Have I spoken rudely or harshly?
- Have I overindulged in food or drink?
- Have I failed to take care of my health or refused to take my doctor's advice?
- Have I spent an immoderate amount time watching television or using the computer?
- Have I consumed too much news, especially when it causes me to get angry?
- Have I indulged in entertainment contrary to Christian decency?
- Have I sexually fantasized about the past on purpose?
- Have I engaged in impure actions with myself?
- Have I used the Lord's name disrespectfully?
- Have I gossiped, cursed, or told lies?
- Have I spoken disrespectfully to my spouse or to a loved one?
- Have I fallen short in generosity?
- Have I failed to financially support the mission of the Church?
- Have I practiced tithing?
- Have I avoided reaching out to others who might be lonely?
- Have I spiritually prepared for the end of my earthly life?

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Or

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.

Words of Encouragement

Elderly persons often have a unique opportunity to grow in holiness. Many people, overwhelmed by the obligations of family and work, have difficulty finding the time for prayer, solitude, and reading scripture. Those who are free from these obligations, however, often have an abundance of time for this. Though you may be confined physically, there is nothing holding you back from soaring spiritually and growing closer to Jesus. Don't miss the opportunity to make good use of the time you've been given.

Nihil Obstat:

Rev. George Welzbacher, Censor liborum

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+ Bernard A. Hebda, Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis, August 2022

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