

## **What to do in this time when it is not possible to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) due to the Stay-At-Home Order?**

As taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (n. 1452) when penitents' access to the sacrament is restricted, they can be assured that their sins are forgiven if they make a good **Examination of Conscience** and an **Act of Contrition** with a firm **resolve to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation after the Safer-At-Home order is lifted.**

### **Examination of Conscience**

I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me. Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day. Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1; the Ascension; Aug. 15; Nov. 1; Dec. 8; Dec. 25)? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

Honor your father and your mother. Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

You shall not kill. Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

You shall not commit adultery. Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

You shall not steal. Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse. Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

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## Act of Contrition

There are a variety of different **Acts of Contrition** suggested in the Rite of Penance. Here are some:

Act of Contrition (traditional)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, 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 sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Act of Contrition (alternate form)

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.

An Act of Contrition inspired by the Gospels

Father of mercy, like the prodigal son I return to you and say: "I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be called your child."

Christ Jesus, Savior of the world, I pray with the repentant thief to whom you promised Paradise: "Lord, remember me in your kingdom."

Holy Spirit, fountain of love, I call on you with trust: "Purify my heart, and help me to walk as a child of light."

An Act of Contrition inspired by the Gospels

Lord Jesus, you opened the eyes of the blind, healed the sick, forgave the sinful woman, and after Peter's denial confirmed him in your love.

Listen to my prayer: forgive all my sins, renew your love in my heart, help me to live in perfect unity with my fellow Christians that I may proclaim your saving power to all the world.

An Act of Contrition to Jesus, the Lamb of God

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world.

Through the grace of the Holy Spirit restore me to friendship with your Father, cleanse me from every stain of sin in the blood you shed for me, and raise me to new life for the glory of your name.

An Act of Contrition inspired by Psalm 51

Lord God, in your goodness have mercy on me: do not look on my sins, but take away all my guilt.

Create in me a clean heart and renew within me an upright spirit.

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

### **Pope Francis's Homily on the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)**

*[Lent] is the time to enter into ourselves and to remember the Father and return to our Daddy. 'But, Father, I'm ashamed to go back because, you know, Father I've ...done so many things wrong'. What will the Lord say? 'Return. I will heal their defection. I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them (Hosea 14:4).' Return to your Father. The God of tenderness will heal us.' "Going back to God is going back to an embrace, the Father's embrace, It's not going to God. No, it's going back home." I know that many of you go to confession before Easter... Many will say to me: 'But Father...I can't leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord. I want Him to embrace me... How can I do that unless I find a priest?'. Do what the catechism says. It's very clear. If you don't find a priest to go to confession, speak to God. He's your Father. Tell Him the truth: 'Lord. I did this and this and this. Pardon me.' Ask His forgiveness with all your heart with an act of contrition, and promise Him, 'afterward I will go to confession.' You will return to God's grace immediately. You yourself can draw near, as the catechism teaches us, to God's forgiveness, is without having a priest at hand." (Pope Francis, Homily, March 20, 2020)*