

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

During Great Lent, and the other fasts of the Church Year, it is customary for all Christians to go to confession to their priest. Properly this should be done several times a year, the exact frequency depending upon how often one is blessed to receive the Holy Mysteries and on the counsel and blessing of one's spiritual father. As a preparation for this sacramental confession and to help one examine one's conscience before coming to confession, the following questions are sometimes distributed in parishes and, although of course the list is not exhaustive, it may be a help to those of our readers who are Christians.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1st Commandment. *Have I willfully doubted or denied my holy religion? Have I taken part in services other than those of my religion? Have I consulted fortune teller, or read forbidden books, or despaired of God's mercy? Have I neglected to worship God with prayer and the Divine Liturgy ?*

2nd Commandment. *Have I made false, unlawful or unnecessary oaths? Have I taken God's name in vain?*

3rd Commandment. *Have I absented myself without due cause from the Divine Liturgy on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Have I done unnecessary servile work on these days, or caused others to do so?*

4th Commandment. *Have I neglected my parents in their necessity ? Have I been disobedient to them, or displayed anger toward them? Have I fulfilled my obligations toward my children? Instructed them? Reprimanded them when necessary? Watched over their companionships, etc?*

5th Commandment. *Have I been angry? Have I been violent toward another, or caused violence without just cause? Have I been jealous of others? Have I been guilty of drinking to excess?*

6th and 9th Commandments. *Have I deliberately taken pleasure in impure thoughts? Have I committed any willful impure actions? Have I gone to places of amusement that I knew would lead me into sin ? Have I kept away from other occasions of sin ?*

7th and 10th Commandments. *Have I stolen anything? Defrauded others of their just wages? Cheated in prices, weights, etc.? Have I through my own fault caused damage to the property of another? Have I made restitution for past sins of this nature? Have I now any ill-gotten goods?*

8th Commandment. *Have I injured (without just cause) the name or reputation of another? By telling lies about him? By exposing without necessity his faults? Have I restored his good name when I have by untruth injured it?*

THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

- 1. Have I attended Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?***
- 2. Have I fasted on the days appointed, and abstained from meat on days of abstinence?***
- 3. Have I confessed at least once a year any mortal sins I may have committed?***
- 4. Have I neglected to make my Easter duty ?***
- 5. Have I contributed to the support of my Church according to my means?***

6. Have I failed in observing Church regulations with reference to the Sacrament of Matrimony?

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

- 1. Pride**
 - 2. Covetousness**
 - 3. Lust**
 - 4. Anger**
 - 5. Gluttony**
 - 6. Envy**
 - 7. Sloth**
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ACCESSORIES TO SIN

By counseling, by commanding, by consenting, by provoking another to sin; by praise of flattery, by concealment, by silence, or by defending that which is wrong.

Sins Against God

- Do you pray to God in the morning and evening, before and after meals?
- During prayer have you allowed your thoughts to wander?
- Have you rushed or gabbled your prayers? or when reading in church?
- Do you read the Scriptures daily? Do you read other spiritual writings regularly?
- Have you read books whose content is anti-Catholic, or is spiritually damaging?
- Have you pronounced the name of God without reverence, joking? Have you asked God's help before starting every activity?
- Have you made the sign of the Cross carelessly, thoughtlessly? Have you sworn? Have you murmured against God?
- Have you sinned by forgetting God?
- Have you been slack in attending church?
- Have you consecrated even part of the feast days, particularly Sundays and the Twelve Great Feasts, to God?
- Have you tried your best to attend church on these days? or have you spent them more sinfully than ordinary days?
- If unable to attend church for some reason, have you nonetheless tried to devote some part of these days to prayer and spiritual reading?
- Have you joined with people not of the Faith in prayer, or attended their worship services?
- Have you kept the fasts?
- Have you behaved irreverently in church, or before the clergy and monastics?

- Have you laughed or talked in church, or moved about unnecessarily, thus also distracting other people from prayer?
- Have dressed modestly and in a becoming manner when in church?
- Have you tried to pay reverent attention to the readings, hymns, and prayers in church?
- Have you striven to pray with the service, crossing yourself, etc., or have you rather simply stood and day-dreamed?
- Have you prepared for the services beforehand, looking up the Scriptural readings, making sure you have the texts to follow the service etc., especially if the service will be in a language you do not readily understand?
- Have you ever left church after the Divine Services, and particularly after receiving the Holy Mysteries and immediately engaged in light talk and thus forgotten the blessings and graces you have received?
- Have you been ashamed of your Faith or the sign of the Cross in the presence of others?
- Have you made a show of your piety?
- Have you used your Faith or its teachings merely to browbeat others or belittle them?
- Have you used it as a shield or excuse for your own inadequacies rather than humbling yourself?
- Have you believed in dreams, fortune telling, astrology, signs and other superstitions?
- Do you give thanks to the Lord for all things?
- Have you ever doubted God's providence concerning yourself?
- Do you at least try to perceive His purpose in all the things that come upon you?

Sins Against Your Neighbours

- Do you respect and obey your parents?
- Have you offended them by rudeness or contradiction?
- (These two apply also to priests, superiors, teachers and elders.)
- Have you insulted anyone?
- Have you quarreled or fought with anyone? Have you hit anyone?
- Are you always respectful to old people?
- Are you ever angry, bad tempered or irritable?
- Have you called anyone names? Do you use foul language?
- Have you derided any that are disabled, poor, old or in some way disadvantaged?
- Have you entertained bad feelings, ill will or hatred against anyone?
- Have you forgiven those who have offended you?
- Have you asked forgiveness from those whom you have offended?

- Are you at peace with everyone?
- Have you left the needy without help when you could have helped?
- Have you attended the sick or elderly when they have asked you to do so?
- Have you shown kindness and attention to all, remembering that God is expecting just such an attitude from you?
- Have you hit animals without a cause or been cruel to them, or neglectful of those in your care?
- Have you stolen anything?
- Have you taken or used other people's things without asking?
- Have you kept money or things that were lent you without returning them?
- Have you wasted your employers' time or resources? Have you taken things from work for your own use, used the firm's phone or other facilities for your own purposes without permission or repayment?
- Are you obstinate, and do you always try to have your own way?
- Have you been inconsiderate of other people's feelings?
- Have you tried to have your revenge against those who have offended you?
- Have you harboured resentment? Have you deceived people?
- Have you gossiped?
- Have you told untruths?
- Have you judged and condemned others?
- Have you taken pains before approaching for confession to be reconciled with all?

Sins Against Yourself

- Have you been proud? Do you boast of your abilities, achievements, family, connections or riches?
- Do you consider yourself worthy before God?
- Are you vain, ambitious? Do you try to win praise and glory?
- Do you bear it easily when you are blamed, scolded or treated unjustly? Do you think too much about your looks, outward appearance and the impression you make?
- Have you sinned in thought, word or deed, by a look or glance, or in any other way against the seventh commandment? (Adultery, fornication, all extra-marital sexual relationships with others, masturbation, engaging in unnatural sexual acts, fantasizing, pornography, etc.)
- Have you envied anyone anything? Have you been over-sensitive?
- Have you been lazy? Have you done your duties heartily?
- Have you wasted your time, energy or abilities in things that do not profit the soul?

- Have you become obsessive about anything? Have you been despondent or listless?
- Have you had thoughts of committing suicide?
- Have you brought a curse on yourself or others or ill-wished them, being impatient?
- Have you a weakness for alcohol? Have you drunk too much, or become dependent on drink?
- Have you taken drugs, other than necessary medicines? Have you smoked?
- Have you watched television too much or indiscriminately? Have you given yourself up to any other similar pastime which wastes your time and energy and might have harmed you?
- Have you been greedy, either with regard to food or to possessions?
- Have you indulged in comfort-eating? Have you become accustomed to eating between meals?
- Have you been picky about your food, or wasteful of foods, forgetting that so many people are without proper nourishment? Have you been extravagant? Have you been wasteful?
- Do you care for and seek first the salvation of your soul, the spiritual life and the kingdom of God, or have you put earthly considerations in the first place?
- Is there any other sin, which burdens your conscience, or which you are ashamed to tell?

