

The Seven Capital Sins

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| 1. Pride, | 5. Gluttony, |
| 2. Covetousness, | 6. Envy, |
| 3. Lust, | 7. Sloth. |
| 4. Anger, | |

Precepts of the Church

The Precepts of the Church (from CCC-Catechism of the Catholic Church) #2041-6). These are also considered 'grave matters' for constituting mortal sins:

1st "You shall attend Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation"

2nd "You shall confess your sins at least once a year". (Canon Law #989 obliges the confession of "serious sin" once per year, however Canon #988;2 recommends also the confession of venial sins, although not obligatory.

3rd "You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season"

4th "You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence"

(Other Obligations & Duties)

"You shall observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage (see 6th commandment & Canon Law #1055)"

"The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities" (Canon Law #222)

"You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind . . . and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (MT.22:37-39).

It is often helpful to think in terms of what we might have done to please God but didn't. In other words, we should confess not only the things we did to offend God, but also things we did not do that might have been done had we been more considerate or less preoccupied with self.

If you remember other serious sins besides those indicated here, mention them in your confession.

On Receiving Communion

St. Paul warns that he who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily "sins against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). In order to receive the Eucharist worthily, we must confess all mortal sins committed since our last confession. Naturally, we feel closer to God, and, therefore, make a better approach to Communion, if we confess on a regular basis such as once per month. In the unlikely event that there is nothing to confess, one may mention the sins of one's past life and express remorse for them even though they have already been confessed and forgiven. This can be a good practice.

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Rite of Confession

Begin by signing yourself and saying:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Bless me Father for I have sinned.

**It has been _____
since my last confession.**

These are my sins.....(confess all that you remember, for mortal sins say the kind of sin it was and the number of times, and end with these words).....I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life.

Listen to the advice the priest may give and be willing to do the penance he gives you.

Say the Act of Contrition:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all, because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

The priest gives you absolution (forgiveness of your sins). Make the sign of the cross when he crosses you, and say "Amen."

Note: Canon Law #964 says:

The penitent's freedom to choose "face to face" confession or to kneel at a fixed confessional grille is to be respected.

- Our Lady's Prayer Groups

Confession or the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Scriptural Reference

Christ forgave sins (Luke 5:18-24) and passed this power on to Peter, who was to act as His representative: "Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven" (Matt. 16:13-19). Jesus also gave the power of absolution to the apostles as a whole: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they shall be retained" (John 20:23). We also have the testimony of two saints, James and John: "Confess your sins to one another" (James 5:16; 1 John 1:8-9).

Preparing for Confession

The Sacrament of Penance is a wonderful Sacrament of forgiveness and mercy. All we need to do is be sorry for our sins. But in order to know what we have done wrong, we have to examine our conscience and really reflect how well we have kept God's commandments of love. Take a few moments to go over the following examination. It is based on the 10 commandments, the Beatitudes of Jesus, and the Precepts of the Church. It will help you to know what sins you have committed and confess them properly in Confession.

What Is Sin?

Very simply, sin is an offense against God. Sins may be minor (venial) or major (mortal). While we are obliged to confess all mortal sins (in number and in kind), we are urged to do the same with venial sins insofar as we are aware of them. Three conditions must exist for a sin to be mortal:

1. The offense must be serious matter,
2. We must be aware of its seriousness - (know it's wrong)
3. There must be full consent of the will - (fully intend to do it)

"To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC #1033, also see #1861)

If any one of the above conditions is absent, the sin in question is venial, and we are not obliged to confess it. One hastens to add, however, that even venial sin is an affront to God, and, as such, we are urged not to take such offenses lightly. All too often, when we don't aim for perfection as Christ recommended ("Be perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect"), we find ourselves sliding in the opposite direction.

Examination of Conscience

Mortal sin would include greivous offenses against the Ten Commandments, any of the seven capital sins or the precepts of the church. Many of these questions are "serious matter" for sins to be mortal. If you are uncertain about the seriousness (mortal or venial), you can consult the new Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Vatican City, 1994, or a good confessor, or a faithful moral theologian.

Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

Do I give God time every day in prayer?

Do I seek to love him with my whole heart?

Did I seriously doubt my faith or put myself in danger of losing my faith through readings hostile to Catholic teachings or involvement in non-Catholic sects?

Have I been involved with superstitious practices: palm reading, fortune telling or have I been involved with the occult?

Do I seek to surrender myself to God's Word as taught by

the Church?

Have I ever received Communion in the state of mortal sin?

Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession or have I withheld a mortal sin from the priest in Confession?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?

Have I been angry with God?

Have I wished evil upon another person?

Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? (which is a mortal sin)

Have I tried to observe Sunday as a family day and a day of rest?

Do I do needless work on Sundays?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

Do I honor and obey my parents?

Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?

Have I given my family good religious example?

Do I try to bring peace into my home life?

Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

5. You shall not kill.

Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone to have an abortion?

Have I physically harmed anyone?

Have I abused alcohol or drugs?

Did I give scandal to anyone, thereby leading them into sin?

Have I been angry or resentful?

Have I harbored hatred in my heart?

Have I mutilated myself through any form of sterilization?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

(A Catholic can contract a true marriage only in the presence of an authorized priest and two witnesses.)

Am I married outside of the Church, (without official Church permission)?

Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?

Have I engaged in any sexual activity outside of marriage?

Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control? (the "pill" aborts)

Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?

Have I used immoral means for procreation? e.g.. the process of invitrofertilization?

Have I been guilty of masturbation?

Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects?

Did I engage in impure jokes or conversations?

Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity?

Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words and actions?

Am I careful to dress modestly?

7. You shall not steal.

Have I stolen what is not mine?

Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?

Have I been honest in all my business relations?

Do I waste time at work, school or at home?

Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying my family of its needs?

Do I pay my debts promptly?

Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I lied?

Did I criticize, gossip or destroy the good name of another?

Have I tried to make restitution for the bad reputation I caused, as far as I could?

How many persons listened to my derogatory remarks?

Have I spoken behind someone else's back?

Did I judge others rashly in serious matters?

Am I sincere in my dealings with others?

Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?

Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

Have I sought to control my thoughts?

Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or feelings?

Have I caused them by impure reading, movies, TV., conversation, or curiosity?

Do I seek to control my imagination?

Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?

10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.

Am I jealous of what other people have?

Do I envy other people's families or possessions?

Am I greedy or selfish?

Are material possessions the purpose of my life?

Do I trust that God will care for all of my material and spiritual needs?