

# St. Theresa Parish

## Mass Guide and Prayer Book



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## **Guidelines for the Reception of Communion**

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*On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the following guidelines on the reception of communion. These guidelines replace the guidelines approved by the Administrative Committee of the NCCB in November 1986. The guidelines, which are to be included in missalettes and other participation aids published in the United States, seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of eucharistic communion.*

### **For Catholics**

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood

of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

### **For our fellow Christians**

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires

permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

### **For those not receiving Holy Communion**

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another. (You may come forward to receive a blessing if you wish)

### **For non-Christians**

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family. (You may come forward for a blessing if you wish)

## **GREETING**

*After the entrance song, everyone remains standing, bows their heads, and makes the sign of the Cross, as the priest says:*

In the name of the Father and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit

*After which the congregation answers:*

**Amen.**

*The priest then greets everyone with one of the number of different greetings, such as:*

The Lord be with you.

**Which the congregation replies with:**

**And also with you.**

*Next is the Penitential Rite, where the priest invites all to reflect on and ask forgiveness for their sins, as they prepare to celebrate and receive the Eucharist. One of the following forms is used:*

## **Form 1**

### **People:**

I confess to Almighty God  
And to you my brothers and sisters,  
That I have sinned through my own fault,  
In my thoughts and in my words,  
In what I have done, and what I have  
failed to do. I ask Blessed Mary, ever  
virgin, and all the angels and saints,  
And you, my brothers and sisters,  
To pray for me to the Lord our God.  
Amen.

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

## **Form 2:**

**Priest:** You were sent to heal the contrite: **Lord Have mercy** **People: Lord have Mercy**

**Priest:** You came to call sinners, **Christ have mercy** **People: Christ have mercy**

**Priest:** You plead for us at the right hand of the Father, **Lord have mercy. People: Lord.....**

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

## **KYRIE**

*If form I was used, the "Lord, have mercy" is prayed now:*

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **GLORIA**

*The Gloria is said or sung on Sundays, other solemnities, and feasts outside of Advent and Lent.*

Glory to God in the highest  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God, and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the  
Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

## OPENING PRAYER

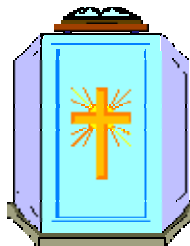
*The priest then says:*

**Let us Pray.**

*He then prays the appropriate Opening Prayer for that particular day, which ends with the following or similar words:*

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ  
your Son who lives and reign with you  
and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and  
ever.

**All: Amen.**



## **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

### **FIRST READING**

*To begin the Liturgy of the Word, everyone sits. The reader goes to the lectern, bows to the altar as he passes in front of it, and reads the appropriate First Reading. This reading is usually from the Old Testament and is similar in theme to the Gospel. (To find the reading, please refer to the music board for the appropriate number.)*

**Reader:** The Word of Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

*The person who read the First Reading or the leader of song will lead the congregation in the appropriate Psalm for that day. This is a reading from the Book of Psalms, in which the congregation repeats one line, and the reader recites the other lines.*

### **SECOND READING**

*On Sundays and other solemnities there is a second reading. The second reading is from the New Testament letters.*

**Reader:** The Word of Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

## ALLELUIA OR GOSPEL

### ACCLAMATION

*Everyone stands for the Gospel.*

*The Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation is sung. If it cannot be sung, it is omitted.*

**Alleluia.**

### GOSPEL

*The priest goes to the lectern, bows to the altar as he passes it, and prays inaudibly:*

*"Almighty God, cleanse my heart and my lips that I may worthily proclaim your gospel."*

*The priest may be accompanied by ministers with candles. He says to the congregation:*

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Priest:** A reading from the holy gospel according to (the author of the gospel read that day).

*Everyone then traces a small Cross with their right thumb on their forehead, on their lips, and on their heart. As they do this, they pray silently, "May the Gospel be on my mind, on my lips, and in my heart," and say aloud:*

**All:** Glory to you, Lord.

*The priest then reads the appropriate Gospel for that day, after which he says:*

**Priest:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*The priest kisses the Gospel, and prays inaudibly: "May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins. "*

*After the Gospel reading, everyone sits for the Homily.*

## **PROFESSION OF FAITH**

*On Sundays and solemnities, everyone stands and prays the Nicene Creed.*

### **NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, Eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down for heaven:

*(all make a profound bow during the next three lines)*

by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic And apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen

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## GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

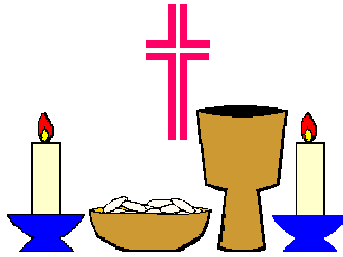
*With a brief introduction, the priest invites the congregation to pray for the needs of the community and for the whole Church. After each intercession, the following is said, although this may vary with the congregation and day of the Mass.*

*(intercession)*

**Reader:** We pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



## PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND THE GIFTS

*Everyone sits. An offertory song may be sung at this time, while the altar is prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There may also be a Procession of the Gifts (the bread and wine), during which the congregation may continue to sit, or they may stand. The correct posture is to remain sitting, but this is not the custom of every congregation.*

*Once the gifts have been received and the altar has been prepared, the priest stands at the altar. If an offertory song is being sung, the priest continues inaudibly and the congregation does not respond. If there is no offertory song, the priest continues audibly and the congregation responds.*

*The priest takes the bread, and holding it slightly raised above the altar, says:*

**Blessed are you Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the Bread of Life.**

**All:** Blessed be God for ever.

*The priest pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying: (inaudibly)*

**By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**

*A little water is poured into the wine for a number of reasons. First, it is a Jewish custom to put a drop of water into the wine before drinking it, and Jesus would have followed this custom during the Last Supper. It also commemorates the flow of blood and water from Jesus' side. As well, it symbolizes the two natures of Christ: divine,*

and human. And Lastly, it symbolizes the faithful who are incorporated into Christ.

Then the priest takes the chalice, and holding it slightly raised above the altar, says:

**Blessed are you Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work and human hands. It will become our Spiritual Drink.**

**All:** Blessed be God for ever.

**Priest: (silently)** "Lord God we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts"



**The gifts may be incensed at this time**

**The priest washes his hands (servers assist) while saying "Lord, wash away my iniquities and cleanse me from my sins."**

Standing at the center of the altar and facing the congregation, the priest says:

**Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.**

The people respond:

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of His name,  
for our good, and the good of all His Church.**

## **PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS**

The priest then prays the appropriate Prayer over the Gifts for that particular day, which ends with the following or similar words:

**Priest:** .... We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

**All:** Amen.

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**If the congregation is not already standing, they should definitely stand now, as the priest says or sings:**

**Priest: The Lord be with you.**

All: And also with you.

**Priest: Lift up your hearts.**

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

**Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God**

All: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

## **PREFACE**

**The Preface begins with the following words, and then varies according to the season and day.**

**Priest: Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks...**



## ACCLAMATION

*After the Preface, everyone sings or says aloud:*

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

## Eucharistic Prayer II

**Priest:** Lord, you are holy indeed, the fountain of all holiness. Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave you thanks, He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

***Take this, all of you, and eat it;  
this is my body which will be given up for you.***

*(the priest raises the host and then genuflects)*

When the supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

***Take this, all of you, and drink from it;  
this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the  
new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed  
for you and for all so that sins may be  
forgiven. Do this in memory of me.***

*(The priest raises the Chalice, then genuflects)*

**Memorial Acclamation:**

**Priest:** Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** A - **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

*or* B - **Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

*or* C - **When we eat this bread and drink this**

**cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.**

***or* D - Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You are the Savior of the World.**

**Priest:** In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup. We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you. May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world; make us grow in love, together with {Benedict} our Pope, Joseph, our bishop, and all the clergy.

Remember our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again; bring them and all the departed into the light of your presence. Have mercy on us all; make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, and with all the saints who have done your will throughout the ages. May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ.

## Eucharistic Prayer III

Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit. From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

***Take this, all of you, and eat it:  
this is my body which will be given up for  
you.***

*(The priest raises the host and then genuflects)*

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

***Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.***

*(The priest raises the chalice and then genuflects)*



**Memorial Acclamation:**

**Priest:** Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** A - Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

*or* B - Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.

*or* C - When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

**or D - Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You are the Savior of the World.**

Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice. Look with favor on your Church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ. May he make us an everlasting gift to you and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints, with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, the martyrs, (*the saint of the day, or patron saint*) and all your saints, on whose constant intercession we rely for help.

Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth; your servant, Pope {N.}, our Bishop ( N. ) and all the bishops, with the clergy and the entire people your son has gathered here before you. In mercy and love unite all you children wherever they may be. Welcome into your kingdom our

departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. We hope to enjoy for ever the vision of your glory, through Christ our Lord, from whom all good things come.

### **Doxology and Great Amen:**

**Priest:** Through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

**All: Amen!** [may be sung more than once]

## **COMMUNION RITE**

### **Lord's Prayer:**

**Priest:** Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

*or* Jesus taught us to call God our Father, and so we have the courage to say:

*or* Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins and to bring us to forgive those who sin against us.

*or* Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it**

**is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us  
from evil.**

*Priest:* Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

***All:* For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.**

**Sign of Peace:**

*Priest:* Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

***All:* Amen.**

*Priest:* The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

***All:* And also with you.**

*Deacon or Priest:* Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

*[The ministers and all the people exchange an embrace, handshake, or other appropriate gesture of peace with those near them, according to local custom.]*

**Breaking of the Bread: The priest begins to fraction the host while the “Lamb of God” is sung or said.**



***All:***

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

**[All kneel]**



**Communion:**

**Priest: (holding up the Host)** This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

**All: Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

**Communion is then distributed according to local custom.**

## CONCLUDING RITE

**Priest: Let us Pray** (all stand): Prayer after Communion (prayer of the day)

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Blessing:** May almighty God Bless, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

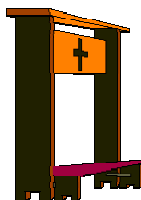
**Dismissal:**

**Deacon or Priest:** Go in the peace of Christ.

*or* The Mass is ended, go in peace.

*or* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God!



## **Catholic Prayers, Devotions and other information**

### **Prayer before Communion**

Of a truth I firmly believe,  
O Good Jesus,  
and with lively faith confess,  
that Thou Thyself,  
equal to God the Father in glory and in power,  
true God and Man,  
art verily and indeed present in this Sacrament.

For Thou, the very high Truth itself,  
hast said, This is My Body, This is My Blood.

I believe whatever the Son of God hath said.

Nothing can be truer than this word of Him who is the Truth.

I do believe, Lord; help my belief, increase my faith.

### **Thanksgiving after Communion**

How delectable is the sweetness of Thy heavenly Bread!

How admirable is the

tranquility  
and how perfect the  
peace of him who  
receives Thee,  
after the contrite and  
sincere confession of  
his sins!  
Be Thou blessed a  
thousand times, my  
Jesus!  
When I was in sin, I  
was unhappy;  
but now not only is my  
soul at peace,  
but I seem to have a  
foretaste of the peace  
of paradise!  
Ah, how true it is,

that our hearts were  
made for Thee,  
my beloved Lord,  
and that they rest only  
when they rest in  
Thee!  
Therefore do I give  
Thee thanks  
and firmly purpose  
evermore to avoid sin  
and its occasions  
and to fix my abode in  
Thy divine Heart,  
whence I look for help  
to love Thee even  
unto death.  
  
Amen.

## **Prayer to Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, Little Flower**

I GREET YOU,  
Saint Therese  
Of the Child Jesus,  
Lily of purity,  
Ornament and glory  
Of Christianity!

I salute you, great saint,  
Seraph of Divine Love.

I rejoice at the favors  
Our Blessed Lord Jesus  
Has liberally bestowed on you.

In humility and confidence  
I entreat you to help me,  
For I know that God  
Has given you  
Charity and pity  
As well as power.

Oh then, behold my distress,  
My anxiety, my fears.  
Oh, tell him now my wants.  
One sigh from you  
Will crown my success,

Will fill me with joy.

Remember your promise  
To do good on earth.  
Obtain for me from God  
The graces of our Divine Lord,

(especially ...state your petition)

Amen.

**Stewardship Prayer**

Almighty and ever-  
faithful Lord,  
gratefully  
acknowledging Your  
mercy  
and humbly admitting  
our need,  
we pledge our trust in  
You and each other.

Filled with desire,  
we respond to Your  
call for discipleship  
by shaping our lives in

imitation of Christ.  
We profess that the  
call requires us  
to be stewards of  
Your gifts.  
As stewards, we  
receive Your gifts  
gratefully,  
cherish and tend them  
in a responsible  
manner,  
share them in practice  
and love with others,  
and return them with  
increase to the Lord.

We pledge to our ongoing formation as stewards and our responsibility to call others to that same endeavor. Almighty and ever-faithful God, it is our fervent hope

### **Memorare**

Remember,  
O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to thee do I come,

and prayer that You who have begun this good work in us will bring it to fulfillment in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy clemency hear and answer me. Amen.

### **A Child's Prayer To Mary**

Holy Mary, mother fair,  
Filled with love for God,  
Pray for us in all our

needs.  
Pray for us today.

## **The Mysteries of the Rosary**

### **The Five Luminous Mysteries** Thursday

- I. The Baptism in the Jordan
- II. The Wedding feast at Cana
- III. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
- IV. The Transfiguration
- V. The Institution of the Eucharist

### **The Five Joyful Mysteries** Monday & Saturday

- I. The Annunciation: Humility

- II. The Visitation: Charity
- III. The Birth of Our Lord: Poverty, or detachment from the world
- IV. The Presentation of Our Lord: Purity of heart, obedience
- V. The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple: Piety

### **The Five Sorrowful Mysteries** Tuesday & Friday

- I. The Agony in the Garden: Contrition for our sins
- II. The Scourging at the Pillar: Mortification of our senses
- III. The Crowning with Thorns:

- Interior  
mortification
- IV. The Carrying of  
the Cross:  
Patience under  
crosses
- V. The Crucifixion  
and Death of Our  
Lord: That we  
may die to  
ourselves

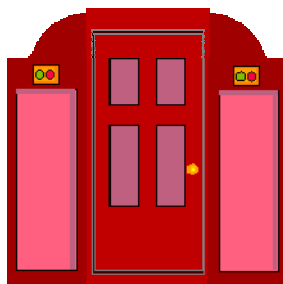
**The Five Glorious  
Mysteries**

Sunday & Wednesday

- I. The Resurrection:  
Conversion of  
heart

- II. The Ascension: A  
desire for heaven
- III. The Coming of  
the Holy Ghost:  
The Gifts of the  
Holy Ghost
- IV. The Assumption  
of our Blessed  
Mother into  
Heaven: Devotion  
to Mary
- V. The Coronation of  
our Blessed  
Mother: Eternal  
happiness

## ***A Guide for Confession***



The basic requirement for a good confession is to have the intention of returning to God like the "prodigal son" and to acknowledge our sins with true sorrow before the priest.

### **Sin in my Life**

Modern society has lost a sense of sin. As a Catholic follower of Christ, I must make an effort to recognize sin in my daily actions, words and omissions.

The Gospels show how important is the forgiveness of our sins. Lives of saints prove that the person who grows in holiness has a stronger sense of sin, sorrow for sins, and a need for the Sacrament of Penance or Confession.

## **The Differences in Sins**

As a result of Original Sin, human nature is weakened. Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, takes away Original Sin, and turns us back toward God. The consequences of this weakness and the inclination to evil persist, and we often commit personal or actual sin.

Actual sin is sin which people commit. There are two kinds of actual sin, mortal and venial.

Mortal sin is a deadly offense against God, so horrible that it destroys the life of grace in the soul. Three simultaneous conditions must be fulfilled for a mortal sin: 1) the act must be something very serious; 2) the person must have sufficient understanding of what is being done; 3) the person must have sufficient freedom of the will.

## **Remember**

If you need help—especially if you have been away for some time—simply ask the priest and he will help

you by "walking" you through the steps to make a good confession.

### **Before Confession**

Be truly sorry for your sins. The essential act of Penance, on the part of the penitent, is contrition, a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed, together with a resolution not to commit it again, out of the love one has for God and which is reborn with repentance. The resolution to avoid committing these sins in the future (amendment) is a sure sign that your sorrow is genuine and authentic. This does not mean that a promise never to fall again into sin is necessary. A resolution to try to avoid the near occasions of sin suffices for true repentance. God's grace in cooperation with the intention to rectify your life will give you the strength to resist and overcome temptation in the future.

### **Examination of Conscience**

Before going to Confession you should make a review of mortal and venial sins since your last sacramental confession, and should express sorrow for sins, and a firm resolution not to sin again.

A helpful pattern for examination of conscience is to review the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church:

1. Have God and the pursuit of sanctity in Christ been the goal of my life? Have I denied my faith? Have I placed my trust in false teachings or substitutes for God? Did I despair of God's mercy?
2. Have I avoided the profane use of God's name in my speech? Have I broken a solemn vow or promise?
3. Have I honored every Sunday by avoiding unnecessary work, celebrating the Mass (also holydays)? Was I inattentive at, or unnecessarily late for Mass, or did I leave early? Have I neglected prayer for a long time?
4. Have I shown Christ like respect to parents, spouse, and family members, legitimate authorities? Have I been attentive to the religious education and formation of my children?
5. Have I cared for the bodily health and safety of myself and all others? Did I abuse drugs or alcohol? Have I supported in any way abortion, "mercy killing," or suicide?
6. Was I impatient, angry, envious, proud, jealous, revengeful, lazy? Have I forgiven others?
7. Have I been just in my responsibilities to employer and employees? Have I

- discriminated against others because of race or other reasons?
8. Have I been chaste in thought and word? Have I used sex only within marriage and while open to procreating life? Have I given myself sexual gratification? Did I deliberately look at impure TV, pictures, reading?
  9. Have I stolen anything from another, from my employer, from government? If so, am I ready to repay it? Did I fulfill my contracts? Did I rashly gamble, depriving my family of necessities?
  10. Have I spoken ill of any other person? Have I always told the truth? Have I kept secrets and confidences?
  11. Have I permitted sexual thoughts about someone to whom I am not married?
  12. Have I desired what belongs to other people? Have I wished ill on another?
  13. Have I been faithful to sacramental living (Holy Communion and Penance)?
  14. Have I helped make my parish community stronger and holier? Have I contributed to the support of the Church?
  15. Have I done penance by abstaining and fasting on obligatory days? Have I fasted before receiving communion?

16. Have I been mindful of the poor? Do I accept God's will for me?

### **During Confession**

After examining your conscience and telling God of your sorrow, go into the confessional. You may kneel at the screen or sit to talk face-to-face with the priest.

Begin your confession with the sign of the cross, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. My last confession was \_\_\_\_\_ weeks (months, years) ago."

The priest may read a passage from Holy Scripture.

Say the sins that you remember. Start with the one(s) that is most difficult to say. (In order to make a good confession the faithful must confess all mortal sins, according to kind and number.) After confessing all the sins you remember since your last good confession, you may conclude by saying, "I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life."

Listen to the words of the priest. He will assign you some penance. Doing penance is a way of expressing our resolve to avoid sin in the future and to make right the sins we have committed in the past. When

invited, express some prayer of sorrow or Act of Contrition such as:

### ***An Act of Contrition***

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because I have offended 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.*

### **At the End of Confession**

Listen to the words of absolution, the sacramental forgiveness of the Church through the ordained priest.

As you listen to the words of forgiveness you may make the sign of the cross with the priest. If he closes by saying, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good," answer, "For His mercy endures forever."

### **After Confession**

Give thanks to God for forgiving you again. If you recall some serious sin you forgot to tell, rest assured

that it has been forgiven with the others, but be sure to confess it in your next Confession.

### **Do your assigned Penance.**

Resolve to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation often. We Catholics are fortunate to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the ordinary way for us to have our sins forgiven. This sacrament is a powerful help to get rid of our weaknesses, grow in holiness, and lead a balanced and virtuous life.

### **Holy Days of Obligation**

All Sundays and the following:

1. January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
2. Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter, the solemnity of the Ascension
3. August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
4. November 1, the solemnity of All Saints
5. December 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
6. December 25, the solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

## Fast and Abstinence

**Good Friday** and **Ash Wednesday** are the major days for fasting in general for those who have reached the age 18 and are not yet 60. Abstinence means no meat on those days for those who are age 14 [or over]. General canon law says that **all Fridays** are days of abstinence -- no meat -- but if you want to eat meat, you should substitute some other form of penance.

The US rules for abstinence from meat includes all Fridays during Lent; **Fast** (small meals, no snacks) + **Abstinence** (as in universal rules -- no meat) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Since the Council, the US bishops have never specified a particular penance for the **other Fridays** of the year; but the universal law still applies -- therefore it is left to the individual to choose the form this penance takes. Since abstinence from meat is traditional (and pretty straightforward), many Catholics observe still this as their form of penance that is required of Catholics on all Fridays (Canon 1250). Many, however, entirely ignore the law of penance on Fridays.

The practice of "giving up something" for Lent is part

of this same requirement in the penitential season of Lent, though what you have to give up is not specified.

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**Canon 1250** All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the entire Church.

**Canon 1251** Abstinence from eating meat