The Rite of Reconciliation

1. Penitent makes sign of Cross and says: “Forgive me Father, for I have sinned. It has been ____ since my last confession.”
2. Priest may pray for peace and trust in God.
3. Priest or penitent may read briefly from Scripture.
4. Penitent may mention a few blessings in life.
5. Penitent confesses his/her sins.
6. Priest gives advice.
7. Priest suggests a “penance”.

An Act of Contrition

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

(“The Jesus Prayer”)
(Approved - Ordo Penitentialis - 1974)


God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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Social concerns

The Word of God enlightens you:

“Brothers, you must be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth. Therefore, putting away all falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbour, for we are members one of another. The thief must no longer steal, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need.” (Eph. 4, 23-28)

“Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel”. (Phil. 1. 27)

- Have I put honest effort into my work, or have I been lazy, idle, irresponsible?
- Have I kept busy, according to my abilities, to promote the common good, or have I promoted injustice or corruption?
- Did I do what was possible when confronted with those in need? Did I take an initiative to support the poor, both far and near, or did I remain indifferent?

Commitment to the Church

The Word of God enlightens you:

“To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for a common benefit. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing to each as he wishes. As a body is one though it has many parts, though many, are one body, so also Christ, as we have all been baptized in the one Spirit to be formed into one body. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it”. (I Cor. 12, 7.11-13. 27)

- Am I conscious of belonging to the Church (=a family of the children of God)?
- Have I participated in the life of my parish community, taking some of my time to be available, according to my capabilities?
- Do I feel love for my community, and have I taken initiatives in formation and promoting charity in my parish? Have I prayed for and promoted vocations to the priesthood and religious life?
- Did I criticize unnecessarily out of spite the pastor and the laity who are responsible for the parish? Did I pray for the Shepherds of the Church: the Pope, Bishops, Priests, Religious?

Sacrament of Reconciliation

We implore you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God

(2 Cor, 5, 20)

“I want to send you all to Paradise, and I announce to you an Indulgence, which I received from the Supreme Pontiff. All you who have come today, … with good disposition and penitent have the indulgence of all their sins”. (St. Francis, Franciscan sources 3397)

“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son and embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began”. (Lk 15, 20-24)
The sacrament of reconciliation was instituted by Jesus on Easter: the Risen Christ gave the apostles the strength of the Holy Spirit, the power to forgive sins (Jn. 20, 22-23). Therefore reconciliation is an event of Easter, that is, an encounter with the Risen Christ who forgives, heals, sanctifies and invites to live a life of the Risen, that is, free from every sin. One who is baptized is a person on the path of ongoing conversion, in continual return to the house of the father, and in continual renewal of spirit.

The sacrament of reconciliation positions itself as the point of arriving at this avenue of conversion and goes to the point of new conversion.

Therefore prepare for the meeting with the Risen as he says to you today, the same as yesterday: “Your sins are forgiven” (Lk 7, 48); “Go, and from now on sin no more” (Jn 8, 11).

The examination of conscience should not hold you in your past, but to make a recognition of sin and open you with faith to the future, walking the new road and building your personality to the measure of the maturity of Christ (Eph. 4, 13).

Ask the Lord to illuminate your heart and your mind with His word. It has been the criteria for evaluating good and evil up to today, and for the new plan to enable you to live as a child of light.

“The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments” (1 Jn 2, 3-5). Whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in them. This is the way that we may know that we are in union with him: whoever claims to abide in him ought to live as he lived:  whoever claims to abide in him ought to keep his commandments (1 Jn 2, 6).

Examination of Conscience

Life with God

The Word of God illuminates you:

“The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love your Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Take care not to forget the Lord”. (Dt 6, 4, 12)

- Do I dedicate some time to reflect on what it signifies to be a Christian (- to say yes to God), among my family, at work, in confronting the problems of society?
- What do I do to know Jesus Christ better?
- Did I read the Gospels?
- Did I participate at Mass on Sundays and holy days to give testimony to my faith in meeting my neighbour, to listen to the Word of the Lord and receive his Body?
- Do I consciously and without superficiality receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist and Reconciliation?
- Do I live Sunday as the “day of the Lord” or do I get carried away with work, in thirst for earnings, or excessive entertainment?
- Have I accused or judged God for those things which did not go as I would have like, or have I been able to accept his will with faith?
- Do I dedicate some time each day to pray to deepen my relationship with God and my faithfulness to him?
- Do I pray only when I need help, or do I also give thanks for the many signs and gifts of his love?
- Do I ever feel the need to remain in prolonged prayer, so that as not to stay completely absorbed in the worries of life?
- Do I pray together with my family and give thanks to the Lord for health, food and family?

Life with neighbour

The Word of God enlightens you:

Above all things is love!

“Love is patient, love is kind; It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13, 4-8)

“I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you should love one another” (Jn 13, 34)

- Are my feelings always directed for the good of my neighbour, and have I been of help in difficulties? Or have I been difficult, selfish, jealous, arrogant?
- Have I insulted, offended, slandered anyone? Have I felt the desire to seek revenge?
- Am I envious of what others have or are able to do?
- Do I help my neighbour in need, or do I waste money on unnecessary or whimsical things?

Personal and family life

The Word of God enlightens you:

“For those who are led by the spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into a spirit of fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Rm. 8, 14-15)

“I urge you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and is pleasing and perfect” (Rm. 12, 1-2)

- Do I accept my limits and defects and trust that the Lord will heal me?
- Did I guide my thoughts with intelligence and prudence, or did I allow them to be dominated by sexual fantasies, by my desires, by my actions?
- Did I give in to a vulgar use of sexuality by abusive language, conversations or films and magazines?
- Do I take proper care of my things and those around me?
- Can I accept criticism with humility and make an account of my failings, or am I proud and arrogant with those who correct me?
- Are my parents (children) able to depend on me? Do I help them? Do I pray for them? Am I open and able to talk, patient, obedient?
- Do I contribute to the good of the family, or do I value more my rights and self-centeredness?
- Do I look for ways to create a serene and joyful atmosphere, or am I the cause of tensions and bad moods for others?
- Have I looked for ways to help my family grow according to the will of God? Do I pray with my family? Do I talk to my family about God, or is my behaviour and language wit them far from God?
- Have I always maintained an openness and respect for life? What is my behaviour towards the elderly?
- Have I betrayed, even if only in mind and heart, my husband, my wife, my fiancé, God?

Prayer for beginning the examination of conscience

O God our Father, who shows your love and your mercy, above all in the sacrament of forgiveness, give me the spirit of truth so that I will be able to acknowledge my sins and confess them with humility.

Forgive me for the times I have surrendered passively to sin and give me a great heart so as not to take me away from the Gospel, and both in my conscience and in the presence of others to serve you in joy and peace. Amen.