

How to go to Confession

We prepare ourselves before going to Confession by prayer and examining our conscience. Various prayer books help us to do this. A good start is to look at the Ten Commandments or Christ's Sermon on the Mount and recognise the areas in which we fall short in our attempt to live the Christian life.

You: [Make the sign of the cross]
'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It is [X] weeks/months since my last Confession, and these are my sins ...'

[Tell the priest those sins of which you are aware and any difficulties you experience in living the Christian life. There is no need to go into great detail, but give any information which has a bearing on what you are saying.]

'For these, and all the other sins I cannot now remember, I am truly sorry.'

Priest: [The priest will briefly offer you help, advice and encouragement. He will then give you a simple penance, possibly a prayer to say. Do not be afraid to ask for further help or explanation.]

'Please make an act of contrition.'

You: 'O my God, because You are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against You and by the help of Your grace I will not sin again.' [Or something similar]

Priest: 'God, the Father of mercies, through the death and Resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit amongst us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from yours sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.'

'Go in peace; your sins are forgiven.' [Or something similar]

Say the penance you have been given in church and thank God for the great gift of forgiveness you have received.