

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

1. The Priest will often begin with the Sign of the Cross or a greeting and blessing.
2. The Penitent begins by saying “*Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been ____ (number of days, weeks, months, etc.) since my last confession. These are my sins*”.
3. Confess all mortal sins committed since your last confession **by kind and number (this is important)**. Hold NOTHING back. You *may* also confess any venial sins.
4. At the end of your confession say these or similar words: “*For these and all the sins of my life I am sorry.*” By this you tell the priest that you are finished. Otherwise, he might think you are still thinking or even trying to summon the courage to tell him "the big one".
5. The Priest may ask questions for clarification or give you some counsel on a point from your confession. Answer *briefly*.
6. The Priest will give you a penance. Listen to it carefully and remember it. You can refuse a penance if it is too vague or impossible to do in a reasonable time.
7. The Penitent makes an **act of contrition** in these or similar words: *O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all of my sins because of Thy just punishments. But most of all because they offend Thee my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen. Memorize a good act of contrition.*
8. The Priest will give you absolution. **Do not leave until the priest has given you absolution. He will not refuse you absolution unless it is clear that you are not sorry for your sins or you have no intention of amending your life.**



Three things are necessary for a sin to be mortal:

- 1. Serious matter (things listed in this examination);**
- 2. Knowledge or firm belief that the act is seriously wrong *prior to committing the act*;**
- 3. Full consent of the will.**

All three of these conditions must be present simultaneously for a sin to be mortal. This means that if you did not know the act was seriously wrong, then you are not guilty of having committed a mortal sin. If you did not will the act, e.g., if you were forced or if it was in a dream, if you were impaired or emotionally distraught or terrified, etc., you are *not guilty* of the act committed.

All mortal sins committed since your last confession must be confessed by both *type and number*, i.e., the kind or "name" of the sin and how many times or frequency it was done. If there is a mortal sin from the past that was forgotten and has not been confessed, once remembered it should be confessed at your very next confession.

It is not necessary to confess venial sins, but it is a good and pious practice.