

Genuine Repentance & Confession heals and makes the immortal soul holy. This is the correct way to prepare for Holy Communion.

So that we can better examine the depths of our conscience, it would be ideal to first read several books on the Sacrament of Confession.[1] Also, discuss any uncertainties that you may have with your wise Spiritual Father-Confessor.[2] The greatest science or knowledge is to get to know ourselves. Also we must not deny ourselves the greatest thing that every human soul thirsts for: a peaceful conscience and eternity with God.

This joy is only granted by the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself instituted the single path to salvation for the repentant sinner within his Church, the holy Sacrament of Repentance and Confession. This is why, friend, you must overcome any obstacle whatsoever that blocks the road to Holy Confession. Here awaits you with genuine Christian love the good Confessor, the representative of Christ, who as a fellow human being can understand and have compassion on his brethren who are also sinful.

Cast far away, brethren, any thought of embarrassment or fright. Why be seared or frightened when your soul frets and pains from the deadly consequences of multi-faceted sin. If sickness tortured your body, would you avoid the hospital or doctor because of embarrassment? But at the same time, do not be led astray by certain people who wish to have read on them a «blessing only,» without having previously confessed. Whenever this happens from ignorance or neglect, it is a terrible sin and an insult to God. With faith, then, and honesty, proceed to Holy Confession.

Be certain also that the infinite love of the crucified and resurrected Lord will welcome you and transform you, removing the weight that burdens you! He himself said, «Come to Me all ye that are heavy laden and I will grant you rest.»

YOU AND GOD

- Do you believe in God, the Holy Trinity, and in the divinity of Christ? Do you respect the Holy Virgin Mary, the Saints, and the Angels? Do you believe in the Church and its Mysteries (Sacraments)? Do you believe that Heaven and Hell exist?

- Do you trust yourself always, and especially during the difficult times of your life, to the care and Providence of God? Or do you despair and show a lack of faith?

- Perhaps in the problems, afflictions, sicknesses, and trials of your life you moan and complain against God and lose your faith and confidence?

- Do you believe in mediums, fortune-telling, tarot card reading, or coffee-cup reading? Do you tell other people to believe in such things and go to such people? You should not!

- Do you believe in superstition? You should not!

- Do you pray morning and evening and before and after each meal? Are you embarrassed to make the sign of the cross in the presence of others, for example, in a restaurant or outside a holy church when you are passing by? Do you not make your cross properly?

- Do you read the Holy Bible as well as other Orthodox spiritual books daily?

- Do you go to church on Sundays and on the major Feast Days?[3]

- Do you follow the Divine Liturgy carefully and reverently from the start until the end, or do you go late and leave before the end? Do you let your mind wander in church?

- Do you go to church dressed in a proper and dignified way? Are you careful not to laugh, or talk even if it is a Wedding or Baptismal service?

- Do you perhaps prevent or restrict your spouse or children from going to church? Or do you tell your acquaintances not to go to church?

- Do you commune regularly or only once a year, and then without Holy Confession?

- Do you give oaths without need or, if so, lie as well? Did you perhaps not fulfill your oath, vow, or promise? The Bible forbids oaths completely, saying that our «yes» be «yes» and our «no» be «no» (St Matthew 5:7).

- Do you blaspheme the Name of God, the Virgin Mary, and our Saints by speaking irreverently of them?

- Do you fast (unless you have a serious health problem) on Wednesdays and Fridays and during the appointed periods of the year?[4]

- Do you throw religious books or periodicals in unclean places?

YOU AND OTHERS

- Do you have hatred and ill-feelings towards someone who did you wrong or insulted you in their anger?

- Are you suspicious and do you without reason suspect that everyone supposedly talks about you, that they don't want you, and that they don't love or like you?

- Are you jealous and upset over the progress, fortune, possessions and beauty of others?

- Are you unmoved by the misfortune and needs of your fellow men?

- In your transactions with your business partners, co-workers, and clients, are you honest and forthright?

- Have you criticized or slandered your fellow man, wrongly accusing them?

- Are you sarcastic and patronizing towards believers, or towards those who fast and endeavor to live a Christian life, or towards those who have physical/mental problems and/or disabilities?

- If you heard some information or criticism against someone, did you pass it on to others and harm (even unwillingly) their reputation and respect?

- Did you criticize the conduct, actions, faults, and mistakes of another person when they were not pres-

A GUIDE TO CONFESSION



ent, even if what you said was the truth? Have you ever criticized the clergy? Do you gossip about and criticize the personal lives of others? Did you listen to someone blaspheming God or a holy person, and not protest?

- Do you curse those who have harmed you, or curse yourself in difficult moments of your life, or curse the day and hour in which you were born?

- Do you send others «to the devil» or give them rude hand gestures?

- Do you respect your parents? Do you look after them? Do you put up with their elderly weaknesses? Do you help them with their bodily and spiritual needs? Are you mindful of their spiritual needs by making sure they go to church and partake worthily of Holy Communion? Have you abandoned them?

- Have you misguided your parents to leave to you in their will more of their estate than is proper, thus causing injustice to your brothers and sisters?

- Perhaps in your anger did you hit anyone with your hands or injure them with your words?

- Do you perform your job or occupation properly and with a good conscience? Or are you unfair to others?

- Do you steal? Perhaps you have encouraged or helped another person to steal? Have you agreed to cover up a theft? Have you bought or accepted goods known to be stolen?

- Are you ungrateful towards God and generally towards your helpers and beneficiaries? Do you grumble and murmur against them?

- Do you keep company with bad and sinful people or associates? With your words or example, have you ever pushed anyone to sin?

- Have you ever committed forgery? Have you ever embezzled or defrauded the public? Have you borrowed money and/or other possessions and without returning or repaying them?

- Have you ever committed murder, in any way?

- Do you entangle yourself in the lives of others or in their work or their families and become the cause of strife, quarrels and disturbances?

- Do you have mercy and compassion on the poor, on orphans, on the elderly, on families with many children struggling to make ends meet?

- Have you lied or added or subtracted from the truth? Do you flatter others in order to get your own way?

- Did you craftily ask for a dowry when you declared your intentions to marry?

- Have you ever sent an anonymous or cruel letter to anyone?

YOURSELF

- Are you a slave to materialism and worldly goods?

- Are you greedy or a lover of money?

- Are you stingy?

- Are you wasteful? Do you live by the Gospel command that whatever you have leftover and above your needs belongs to the poor? Do you have too much love towards pets and waste money on them while people are dying of starvation?

- Are you conceited and arrogant? Do you talk back to your elders and superiors?

- Do you like to show off with your clothing, wealth, fortunes, and the academic achievements of your children or of yourself?

- Do you seek attention and glory from people? Do you wear perfume, make-up, and change the appearance that your Creator gave to you?

- Do you accept compliments and praise from others gladly and like to be told that no one else exists who is as good as you?

- Do you get upset when others reveal your faults and do you get offended when others examine you and when your seniors make comments about you? Do you get angry?

- Are you perhaps stubborn, high-minded, egotistical, proud, or cowardly? Be careful with these sins, as the diagnosis and solution to them are difficult.

- Do you gamble or play cards, even without money, with relatives and people at home to «kill time» as the saying goes?

- Have sexual sins polluted your body, mind, or soul?

- Do you watch dirty shows on television or at the movies?

- Have you ever considered committing suicide?

- Are you a slave to your stomach (i.e. gluttony)?

- Are you lazy, careless and negligent? Do you not help out when you can?

- Do you say improper, dirty, and immoral words or use swear words for the sake of humor or to insult or humiliate others?

- Do you have a spirit of self-denial?

- Do you expel from your mind bad or sly thoughts that come to pollute your heart?

- Are you careful so that your eyes don't gaze or stare at provocative pictures or people? Do you go to the movies and theatres?

- Are you careful what you ears hear? Do you like to hear sinful music and conversations?

- Do you dress immorally

- Do you dance in a provocative and sinful manner?

- Are you a drunkard? Do you abuse «recreational» or pharmaceutical drugs?

- Do you smoke? Smoking destroys your God-given valuable health and is also wasteful of money, and therefore is a sin.

- Do you talk excessively about meaningless things?

FOR COUPLES

- Do you remain faithful to each other? It is tragic when one of you is unfaithful to the other.

- Did one of you embarrass or criticize the other publicly or privately?

- Do you not endure the apparent weakness of the other? Do you show harshness?

- Do you or your partner permit the other to follow the latest fashion and trend and anything which is opposed to the law of God? Do you perhaps drag the other along to parties on the condition that you will in this way provide the other the means to follow fashion and a worldly life?

- Do you take into consideration the struggle the other has outside and inside the home, so that you both help each other bodily and spiritually in the struggle?

- As a partner, have you had excessive sexual demands and degraded your relationship? Do you abstain from sexual relations on Wednesdays, Fridays, Sundays, Feast Days, (including the night before) and on the days of the Holy Fasts of the Church?

- Do you perhaps prevent your partner from going to church, spiritual gatherings and talks?

