

Guide for Preparation in Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

What are mortal sins?

Mortal sins are serious offenses that, according to Catholic doctrine, break our relationship with God and deprive us of sanctifying grace. For a sin to be considered mortal, three conditions must be met:

1. **Grave matter** (the act must be objectively serious).
2. **Full knowledge** (the person must know that what they are doing is a grave sin).
3. **Deliberate consent** (the person must do it freely and with full awareness).

In Christian theology, a mortal sin is a gravely sinful act which can lead to damnation if a person does not repent of the sin before death. It is alternatively called deadly, grave, and serious; the concept of mortal sin is found in both Catholicism and Lutheranism. A sin is considered to be ‘mortal’ when its quality is such that it leads to a separation of the person from God’s saving grace.

Here is a list of some common mortal sins:

1. **Blasphemy:** Insulting or showing contempt for the name of God, the Virgin Mary, or the saints.
2. **Missing Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation without a justified reason:** It is a grave sin not to attend Mass knowing that it is an obligation for Catholics.
3. **Homicide:** Killing another human being, whether directly or indirectly.
4. **Abortion:** Deliberately ending the life of an unborn human being.
5. **Suicide:** Intentionally taking one's own life.
6. **Adultery:** Having sexual relations with someone who is not your spouse.
7. **Fornication:** Having sexual relations outside of marriage.
8. **Pornography:** Consuming or participating in the creation of pornographic material.
9. **Masturbation:** Performing a solitary sexual act for the purpose of obtaining pleasure outside of the marital context.
10. **Theft:** Taking something that belongs to another person, especially if it is something of great value.
11. **Lying under oath (perjury):** Deliberately lying when a promise has been made before God or under oath.
12. **Slander or defamation:** Deliberately lying to harm another person's reputation.
13. **Failure to help those in need:** Refusing to help when someone is in extreme need and you have the means to do so.
14. **Deliberate injustice against one's neighbor:** Acting maliciously or deliberately harming others (e.g., exploiting workers, committing fraud, etc.).
15. **Deliberate hatred or resentment:** Refusing to forgive someone or harboring deep and lasting hatred against someone.
16. **Participating in occult practices or witchcraft:** Includes black magic, spiritualism, sorcery, Ouija boards, invocation of evil spirits, etc.
17. **Destructive envy:** Seriously wishing harm upon someone out of jealousy or envy.
18. **Drunkenness and drug use:** The excessive use of alcohol or drugs that leads to a loss of control of one's mental faculties.
19. **Lust:** Deliberately seeking sexual pleasure for its own sake, outside of a marital and loving relationship.
20. **Artificial contraception:** The use of artificial methods to prevent conception within marriage.
21. **Homosexual relations:** According to traditional teaching, homosexual acts (not the inclination or tendency) are considered grave sins.
22. **Profaning the sacraments:** Receiving the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in a state of mortal sin or without due respect.

What are venial sins?

Venial sins are those faults that, although they do not break our relationship with God, weaken our spiritual life and distance us from His grace. Unlike mortal sins, which destroy charity in the heart of man, venial sins do not deprive us of divine life, but they do prevent us from growing in virtue and holiness. These sins are less serious, but no less important, since they can lead us to commit more serious offenses if we do not correct them in time. The main difference between venial and mortal sins lies in their gravity and the consequences they have for our soul. While mortal sins destroy sanctifying grace and require sacramental confession to be forgiven, venial sins can be forgiven through prayer, repentance, and receiving the Eucharist.

What are the 10 most common venial sins?

Venial sins can manifest themselves in various ways in our daily lives. Below is a list of the 10 most frequent venial sins and how you can avoid them:

1. **Gossip:** Speaking ill of others, whether by criticizing their actions or spreading rumors, is a venial sin that harms charity and unity among people. To avoid it, it is important to practice fraternal charity and always seek the good of others.
2. **Impatience:** Losing your temper in frustrating situations or expecting immediate results can lead us to commit acts of impatience. Cultivating the virtue of patience and trusting in God's plan are key to overcoming this sin.
3. **White lies:** Telling small lies to avoid conflict or make someone feel good may seem harmless, but it is a venial sin that goes against the truth. It is fundamental to live in truth and be honest at all times.
4. **Spiritual laziness:** Neglecting prayer, spiritual reading, or attending Mass are manifestations of spiritual laziness. To combat it, it is necessary to cultivate a life of prayer and seek God's presence in our daily lives.
5. **Envy:** Feeling jealous of the achievements or possessions of others is a venial sin that distances us from charity. Learning to rejoice in the good fortune of others and being grateful for what we have are attitudes that help us overcome envy.
6. **Selfishness:** Thinking only of our own interests and neglecting the needs of others is a venial sin that goes against the commandment of love. Practicing generosity and service helps us overcome selfishness.
7. **Lack of charity:** Not being kind, not helping our neighbor, or not being forgiving are attitudes that reflect a lack of charity. It is important to love as Christ loves us and always seek the good of others.
8. **Vanity:** Seeking the admiration of others or boasting about our qualities is a venial sin that distances us from humility. Practicing humility and recognizing that all good things come from God helps us combat vanity.
9. **Gluttony:** Eating or drinking excessively, even without becoming ill, is a venial sin that goes against temperance. It is important to moderate our appetites and use God's gifts responsibly.
10. **Distraction during prayer:** Allowing our minds to wander during prayer or not paying attention during moments of encounter with God is a venial sin that weakens our relationship with Him. It is essential to be present in prayer and seek intimacy with God.

Examination of Conscience with the 10 Commandments

First Commandment: "I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange gods before Me."

<input type="checkbox"/> Have I denied God?	<input type="checkbox"/> Have I used witchcraft, Wicca, or other Occult practices?
<input type="checkbox"/> Have I been ashamed of or denied my faith in front of others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Have I practiced various forms of superstition such as fortune tellers, mediums, Ouija boards, tarot cards?
<input type="checkbox"/> Have I ridiculed the teachings or practices of the Church?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have I neglected my prayers?	

Second Commandment: "Do not take the name of the Lord in vain."

<input type="checkbox"/> Do I use God's name carelessly, in anger, or in surprise?	<input type="checkbox"/> Have I called down evil upon anyone or anything?
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Third Commandment: "Keep holy the Sabbath Day."

<input type="checkbox"/> Have I, through my own fault, failed to come to Mass each Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do I arrive at Mass late or leave early without good reason?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do I allow myself to be distracted at Mass?

Fourth Commandment: "Honor your father and mother."

<input type="checkbox"/> Have I disobeyed my parents or treated them with disrespect?	<input type="checkbox"/> Am I disrespectful, impolite, or discourteous toward my family?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Have I neglected my work or my studies?

- Have I been helpful in my home?
- Have I failed to study seriously and with diligence?
- Have I missed an exam at school because of laziness?

Fifth Commandment: “You shall not kill.”

- Did I have an abortion or help another to have an abortion?
- Have I mutilated my body or another’s body?
- Did I attempt suicide or seriously consider thoughts of suicide?
- Do I act violently by fighting or hitting others?
- Have I had thoughts of hatred toward another?
- Have I taken illegal drugs or abused prescription drugs?
- Have I sold or distributed illegal drugs?
- Do I neglect to take proper care of my body?
- Do I eat too much, or sleep too much?

Sixth & Ninth Commandments: “Do not commit adultery. Do not covet your neighbors wife.”

- Have I desired or done impure things?
- Have I taken pleasure in entertaining impure thoughts or desires?
- Have I read impure material, listened to music with impure lyrics, or looked at impure images, whether in photos or on television or in movies or on the Internet?
- Have I aroused sexual desire in myself or another by impure kissing, embracing, or touching?

Seventh & tenth Commandments: “You shall not steal. Do not covet your neighbor’s goods.”

- Have I taken anything that was not my own?
- Have I damaged private or public property or defaced it by vandalism?
- Have I been guilty of shoplifting?
- Have I accepted or bought stolen property or helped someone to steal?
- Have I bribed someone?
- Do I gamble excessively?

Eighth Commandment: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

- Have I lied deliberately?
- Have I sworn to do something sinful or illegal?
- Have I slandered others by attributing to them sins they did not commit or of which I had no evidence?
- Do I gossip about others or listen to gossip?
- Have I told a secret I was asked to keep?
- Have I betrayed someone’s trust?
- Have I criticized anyone uncharitably?

Other considerations:

- Am I greedy or selfish or do I indulge in self-pity?
- Am I proud or vain or do I show off?
- Am I superficial and worldly?
- Do I desire to be praised by exaggerating my success?
- Am I touchy and hypersensitive?
- Do I magnify the least oversight or thoughtlessness into an insult or deliberate slight?
- Have I been boastful?
- Have I been arrogant with others?

Examination of Conscience with 7 Deadly Sins

Pride: “Pride is an untrue opinion of ourselves, an untrue idea of what we are not.”

- Have I a superior attitude in thinking, or speaking or acting?
- Am I snobbish?
- Have I had offensive, haughty ways of acting or carrying myself?
- Do I hold myself above others?
- Do I demand recognition?

- Am I disrespectful toward the elderly?
- Am I disobedient to the civil law or to those in authority such as the police?

- Do I drink beer or other alcoholic beverages in excess?
- Have I allowed myself to become intoxicated?
- Am I too concerned about my health or appearance?
- Do I deliberately harbor unkind and revengeful thoughts about others?
- Have I taken revenge?
- Have I used harsh or abusive language toward another?
- Do I act rudely, impolitely, or ridicule others?
- Have I been guilty of the sin of racism?
- Am I cruel to animals?

Sixth & Ninth Commandments: “Do not covet your neighbors wife.”

- Have I committed impure actions alone, i.e., masturbation?
- Have I committed same gender acts or other unnatural acts?
- Do I use artificial contraception whether surgical, barrier or chemical methods?
- Have I dressed immodestly or been too concerned with the way I look?
- Do I use vulgar language or tell or listen to impure jokes or stories?

Seventh & tenth Commandments: “You shall not steal. Do not covet your neighbor’s goods.”

- Have I borrowed something without the owner’s permission?
- Have I failed to return something I borrowed?
- Do I waste money or spend it extravagantly?
- Have I harbored a greed for money or worldly possessions?
- Have I made of money, or any possession, a false god?
- Do I waste goods or food?
- Have I cheated on tests or schoolwork?
- Have I cheated in games or sports?

Eighth Commandment: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

- Do I make rash judgments and harbor false suspicions about others?
- Have I deliberately misled or deceived anyone?
- Have I refused to forgive someone or held a grudge against him or her?
- Have I failed to apologize or make amends to someone I offended?

- Have I obstinately defended actions which are sinful, either my own or other’s?
- Am I rebellious?
- Have I spent useless time planted before the TV when I could be doing more constructive things?
- Am I envious of someone’s possessions and do I inordinately desire them to be my own?
- Do I take delight in the misfortunes of others?

- Have I lied about others?
- Do I make known the faults of others?
- Do I seek to place the blame on others, excusing myself?
- Is there anyone to whom I refuse to speak?
- Is there anyone to whom I have not spoken for a long time?
- Am I prone to argue?

- Am I offensive in my arguments?
- Have I a superior “know-it-all attitude” in arguments?
- Am I self-conscious?
- Am I sensitive?
- Am I easily wounded?

Envy: “Envy is a sadness which we feel, on account of the good that happens to our neighbor.”

- Do I feel sad at the prosperity of others?
- At their success in games? In athletics?

- Do I rejoice at their failures?
- Do I envy the riches of others?

Sloth: “Sloth is a kind of cowardice and disgust, which makes us neglect and omit our duties, rather than to discipline ourselves.”

- Have I an inordinate love of rest, neglecting my duties?
- Do I act lazily?
- Am I too fond of rest?
- Do I take lazy positions in answering prayers?

- Do I kneel in a lounging way?
- Do I delight in idle conversation?
- Do I fail to be fervent in the service of God?

Lust: “Lust is the love of the pleasures that are contrary to purity.”

- Have I desired or done impure things?
- Have I taken pleasure in entertaining impure thoughts or desires?
- Have I read impure material, listened to music with impure lyrics, or looked at impure images, whether in photos or on television or in movies or on the Internet?
- Have I aroused sexual desire in myself or another by impure kissing, embracing, or touching?

- Have I committed impure actions alone, i.e., masturbation?
- Do I dress immodestly or am I too concerned with the way I look?
- Do I use vulgar language or tell or listen to impure jokes or stories?
- Have I given into desires of adultery even in my imagination?

Covetousness: “Covetousness is a disordered love of the goods of this world.”

- Do I dispose of my money properly or selfishly?
- Do I discharge my duties in justice to my fellow man?
- Do I discharge my duties in justice to the Church?

Gluttony: “Gluttony is a disordered love of eating and drinking.”

- Do I eat to live or live to eat?
- Do I drink to excess?
- Do I get drunk?
- Do I misuse prescription drugs?
- Do I use illegal drugs?
- Have I allowed myself to become addicted to alcohol and/or drugs?

Anger: “An emotion of the soul, which leads us violently to repel whatever hurts or displeases us.”

- Am I prone to anger?
- Does practically any little thing arouse my temper?
- Am I what is generally termed “a sorehead”?
- Do I fail to repress the first signs of anger?
- Do I fail to get along well with everybody?
- Do I ponder over slights or injuries and even presume them?
- Do I rejoice at the misfortunes of others?
- Do I think of means of revenge? Of “getting even”?
- Am I of an argumentative disposition? Have I a spirit of contradiction?
- Am I given to ridicule of persons, places, or things?
- Am I hard to have a good relationship with?
- Do I carry grudges, remain “on the outs” with anyone?
- Do I talk about the faults of others?
- Do I reveal the faults or defects of others?
- Do I reveal the faults of others from the wrong motive?

Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Go into the confessional and begin, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*
- Forgive me, father, for I have sinned. It has been (how long?) since my last confession and these are my sins...**
- (confess your sins, when you are done remember to say that you have complete the confession)*
- The Celebrant will give you a penance and then ask you to pray for the Act of Contrition.*

ACT OF CONTRITION

- My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.
- My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.
- The celebrant will then say the prayer of forgiveness (absolution). Leave and do your penance.*