

## **Examination of Conscience...Preparing for Confession**

So first thing, find a good examination of conscience. There's this prayer called the Litany of Humility by Cardinal Merry de Val it says,

**"Lord, from the desire of being loved, deliver me in Jesus.  
From the desire of being extolled, deliver me Jesus."**

There are some areas in my life where I may have said,

**"God, I know what you want. But I want what I want."**

Another opportunity to examine your conscience is go to Jesus' own words, the Beatitudes.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus says blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the merciful they'll be shown mercy.

Do I live in a meek way? Do I show mercy?

Do I work and strive after peace?

These are areas where I can look at my life and say, "Am I doing it or am I not?"

One way to examine your conscience is to go over your day, your actual day that day.

This is usually at the end of the day, right?

Now go over your day and walk through it in your memory about what happened.

For all the areas in your life that day, where you have said yes to God, where his grace was there, his invitation was there and you said "yes", go through that day and say, "Thank you God for this."

At the end of the day, "Thank you, Lord," and then start again.

Then go back to the beginning.

What were those times of your day where God was offering his grace and you said "no"?

What were those times through your day where God, where it was very clear that God said, "I want you to do this," but you said, "I want to do what I want to do"?

To go through those moments of your day and at the end of that, say, "God, I'm sorry. Please forgive me," and lay that at the feet of Jesus, because you realise it's not just about sin, it's about living out of a relationship with God. That's why the first thing I need to ask myself is this:

**"Is God at the centre of my life or is He in the side-lines in my life?"**

The degree to which you are living from the relationship with God is the active part of your life.

"God, I notice you were here, thank you."

"God I knew you were here and you were inviting me to do something and I didn't do it, I'm sorry."

If you take this approach to examine your conscience and begin living them, begin walking through them, begin practicing them, knowing that God needs to be at the centre and not at side-lines, you'll begin learning how to make confession, to go to confession like an adult.

Actually, learning how to go to confession like a saint.

And that's what God wants you to be.

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### IN CONFESSION

Begin by saying:

**"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."** Then add:

**"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been *[state the length of time]* since my last confession and these are my sins".**

Now confess your sins. Be simple and straightforward. Just put into words what you have done wrong since you last went to confession. Don't make excuses; but if it helps, say a little bit about what happened and why. When you have finished, say:

**"I am sorry for these sins and for those I cannot remember".**

The priest might then talk to you and give you some advice. He will give you a penance to do (a prayer or action that expresses your sorrow and your desire to put things right and live a new life).

The priest will then ask you to make an Act of Contrition. You will say:

**"O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you; and with the help of your grace, I will try not to sin again."**

The priest then says the prayer of absolution, which is the moment when God forgives your sins. He may add some other prayers as well.

**The Priest will say** "...I absolve you from your sins, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. God has forgiven you your sins, go in peace."

Now you can leave the Confessional.

### AFTER CONFESSION

If it is possible now, do your penance in the church before you leave; e.g. if you have been asked to say a certain prayer, kneel down and say it now.

Pray for a moment in thanksgiving for the forgiveness you have received in this sacrament; and pray for God's help to live a new life.