

When you are with the priest make **the Sign of the Cross** with him and then it is helpful:

- 1) To let him know if you are single, engaged, married or widowed, divorced or separated; a religious sister or brother;
- 2) To let him know **how long** it is since your last confession of sins, when you last celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation;
- 3) for any serious, deliberate, grave or mortal sins let him know the kind of sin, the frequency and number – at least roughly;
- 4) to speak about any areas of difficulty or struggle in your life with God, others or yourself.

These words may be helpful to begin:

- 1) Bless me Father, for I have sinned
- 2) it is *(say how many weeks, months or years it may have been)* since my last confession and
- 3) these are my sins:
- 4) *(then tell the priest your sins, all that is coming between you and God, and other people and even within yourself.)*

For any thing you may have forgotten, you might say after your confession of sins:

**“I am sorry for these and all my other sins,
which I cannot now remember,
and I humbly ask pardon of God,
and penance and absolution from you Father.”**

The priest may speak with you for a little while and give you a **PENANCE**: a prayer or work to do to make **SATISFACTION** for sins committed, to heal and restore your friendship with God, others and yourself. Then you repeat your **ACT OF CONTRITION** (from the front page of this leaflet) and he will give you **ABSOLUTION**, and free you from all your sins.

“God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the whole world to Himself, and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins: in the Name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

You make **THE SIGN OF THE CROSS** and say: **AMEN**. Priest: *The Lord has freed you from your sins, go in peace, and please, pray for me. THANKS BE TO GOD! Then you leave the priest and say, or do, your penance.*

ST MARY OF THE CRAYS, CRAYFORD
GOING TO CONFESSION FOR “GROWN UPS”.

“Going to Confession” is how we have often described celebrating the **Sacrament of Penance**, also known as: **Reconciliation, Mercy, Pardon and Peace or Forgiveness**. We remember that we are children of God. God loves each us in a very personal way.

1) We make an **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**: please see inside this leaflet. We might call this also reviewing our lives. In this way we can ask ourselves: “How have I shown my love for God, others and myself: in my thoughts, in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do?”

2) Next, we say sorry, an **ACT OF CONTRITION**, for our sins, the ways and times we have failed to show our love for God, others and ourselves. Here is a short and memorable

ACT OF CONTRITION:

**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 not sin again. Amen.**

We can do this at the end of every day before we close our eyes for sleep, because:

“In the evening of our lives we shall be asked about love.”

(St John of the Cross)

At least **once a year**, or every school term, or every quarter, or better still, **once a month**, we can take our sins, our failures in our love for God, others and ourselves to

3) **CONFESSION**. In this healing Sacrament we tell the priest our sins, shortcomings and struggles. The priest may speak with us and he will ask us to do some work or prayer. We call this

4) a **PENANCE, or SATISFACTION**. Then we repeat our **Act of Contrition** and the Priest gives us:

5) **ABSOLUTION**. In this the priest speaks in the Person of Christ and His Church and forgives us our sins.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:

Before you examine your conscience, or review your life, ask the Holy Spirit to help you discover the areas and sins that that Lord wants to heal in you:

“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You will renew the face of the earth. Let us pray: O God Who has taught the hearts of Your faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of that same Holy Spirit, we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in Your consolation through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“Love God with all your heart, your mind, your soul and your strength”:

Do I recognise God’s place and authority in my life, or do I follow my own agenda, fitting God in when it is convenient? Is my life controlled by my own ambitions and desires, my career, or a need for human respect, rather God’s loving authority and word?

Do I open myself to the love of God each day and recognise God in my life in daily prayer?

Do I honour God and give witness to my faith in God by taking a full, active and conscious part in the whole of the Holy Mass, The Most Holy Eucharist, every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation?

Do I reverence God’s Name in my speech?

“Love your neighbour = as you love yourself”:

Do I build up or break down relationships with members of my family, close relatives, fellow-workers, and neighbours? Do my words or actions show self-centredness?

Am I concerned only for myself, or do I show compassion and concern in word and in deed for others, including the poor, less fortunate, sick and suffering? Do I recognise and respond to my obligation as a Christian to be aware of injustice in society and foster justice, peace and human dignity, with respect for all human life from conception to natural death and all the stage and times between?

Do I allow myself to be controlled by my moods at home or at work? Am I angry, bitter or resentful towards anyone, particularly family members? How long have I had these attitudes? Do I confront the sin of anger or do I savour it?

Have I forgiven everyone who has injured or offended me? Have I damaged anyone’s reputation or dignity through gossip and/or lies?

Do I honour my parents, showing them proper respect and loving obedience? Have I been cynical or disrespectful to legitimate authority?

Do I give my mind over to lustful thoughts (fantasies or daydreams)? Has my conversation included obscene or foul language or stories? Have I read pornography or watched movies or television programmes which grieve the Holy Spirit within me? Have I acted impurely by myself or with others? Have I had or helped someone else to procure an abortion?

Have I been truthful in my words as well as my actions?

Have I abused my body through the misuse of drugs, alcohol or food?

Have I taken part in the occult, witchcraft, Freemasonry, fortune telling, palm reading, astrology, reiki, yoga, or other superstitious or “New Age” activities?

Are there any other areas in my life in which the Holy Spirit is leading me towards repentance – past sins forgotten or deliberately covered over; troubling hurts that need healing; special areas of difficulty that I can now see in the light of the Holy Spirit?

Other Possible Acts of Contrition:

O my God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins, and detest them above all things, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour **Jesus** Christ, and most of all because they offend Thine infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin. **Amen.**

I love You **Jesus**, My Love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from You again. Grant that I may love You always, then do with me what You will. **Amen.** *St Alphonsus de Liguori*