



Preparing for the Sacrament of Penance

Ask God for the Holy Spirit's help to examine your conscience well by prayerfully reviewing your conduct in light of the commandments and the example of Christ.

Tell the priest the specific kind of sins you have committed and, to the best of your ability, how many times you have committed them since your last good confession. Avoid generalizations and inform the priest of any relevant circumstances in which your sins were committed.

You are obliged to confess only mortal sins, since you can obtain forgiveness for your venial sins by sacrifices, acts of charity, prayer and other pious actions. Confession of venial sins, however, is very helpful for avoiding sin and advancing in holiness toward Heaven.

If you are in doubt about whether a sin is mortal or venial, mention your doubt to the priest. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." (CCC 1857)

Always tell the priest your state of life: married or single, priest or religious, under religious vows or promises.