The "Examination of Conscience" and "Reconciliation of a Penitent" can be used as an aid to help us prepare for our Confession.

*Before self-examination, say this prayer:*
O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before thy judgment-seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the loving Heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Examination of Conscience

- Think of yourself as God's child who has disobeyed your loving Father.
- Do not be in a hurry. Be honest with God and with yourself; this is all God asks of you.
- Write down briefly what you remember of your sins. Don't try to depend on your memory.
- Do not fret about your sins. Remember, you are trying to recall them in order that you may be forgiven, not that you may be condemned, "A broken and contrite heart, O Lord, shalt thou not despise."

Reviewing these commandments is a good way to examine our conscience and reflect on how we are doing.

1. **I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage. You shall have no other gods but me.**

   Do I believe and trust in God?
   Do I love and obey God?
   Do I bring others to know him?

2. **You shall not make for yourself any idol.**

   Have I put anything in the place of God?

3. **You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.**

    Have I shown God respect in thought, word, and deed?

4. **Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.**

    Do I set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God's ways?

5. **Honor your father and your mother.**

    Have I loved my neighbors as I love myself?
    Do I treat others as I want to be treated?
    Do I love, honor, and help our parents and family?
    Do I honor those in authority?

6. **You shall not commit murder.**

    Do I show respect for the life God has given me?
    Do I work and pray for peace?
    Have I carried malice, prejudice, or hatred in my heart?
    Am I kind to all the creatures of God?

7. **You shall not commit adultery.**

    Have I used all my bodily desires as God intended?

8. **You shall not steal.**

    Am I honest and fair in my dealings?
    Have I sought justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people?
    Do I use my talents and possessions as someone who must answer for them to God?

9. **To speak the truth, and not to mislead others by our silence.**

Have I lied?
Have I kept silent about injustices I've observed, thus implying consent?
Have I given false testimony against someone?

10. **You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

Have I resisted temptations to envy, greed, and jealousy?
Do I rejoice in other people's gifts and graces?
Do I do things for the love of God, who has called us into fellowship with him?

After you have prepared, the following form is used when you make your Confession.

## The Reconciliation of a Penitent

When you come to the place where confessions are being heard, stand in line and quietly enter when the person ahead of you is finished. You may bring the paper in with your list of sins. What you will see is a place for the penitent to kneel and the priest sitting either with his back to you or beside you. Simply kneel and when you are ready, say the following:

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| *The Penitent begins* | Bless me, for I have sinned. |
| *The Priest says* | The Lord be in your heart and upon your lips that you may truly and humbly confess your sins: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. |
| *Penitent says* | I confess to Almighty God, to his Church, and to you, that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed, in things done and left undone; especially _____(add your sins) . For these and all other |

sins which I cannot now remember, I am truly sorry. I pray God to have mercy on me. I firmly intend amendment of life, and I humbly beg forgiveness of God and his Church, and ask you for counsel, direction, and absolution.

[*Here the Priest may offer counsel, direction, and comfort.*]

*The Priest then pronounces this absolution*
Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive you all your offenses; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve you from all your sins: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*or this*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself to be sacrificed for us to the Father, and who conferred power on his Church to forgive sins, absolve you through my ministry by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and restore you in the perfect peace of the Church. Amen.

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| *The Priest adds* | The Lord has put away all your sins. |
| *Penitent says* | Thanks be to God. |
| *The Priest concludes* | Go in peace, and pray for me, a sinner. |

It is helpful to then go into the church and read the appointed psalms or whatever the priest has given you to do. It is a time to compose yourself and come to the realization that your sins are forgiven by God and to carry them no longer. Give thanks to the Lord for His boundless mercy and forgiveness.

"Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."