

# HOW TO:

## the Sacrament of Reconciliation

### 1. Preparation

Before going to confession, take some time to prepare. Begin with prayer, and reflect on your life since your last confession. (See reverse side for help with your *Examination of Conscience*.)

### 2. Greeting

The priest will welcome you; he may say a short blessing or read a Scripture passage.

### 3. The Sign of the Cross

Together, you and the priest will make the Sign of the Cross. You may then begin your confession by saying: **"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [give days, months or years] since my last confession."**

### 4. Confession

Confess all your sins to the priest. If you are unsure what to say, ask the priest for help. When you are finished, conclude with these or similar words: **"I am sorry for these and all my sins."**

### 5. Penance

The priest will propose an act of penance. He might also counsel you on how to better live a Christian life.

### 6. Act of Contrition

After the priest has conferred your penance, pray an Act of Contrition, expressing sorrow for your sins and resolving to sin no more:

**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.**

### 7. Absolution

The priest will extend his hands over your head and pronounce the words of absolution. You respond, **"Amen."**

### 8. Praise

The priest will usually praise the mercy of God and will invite you to do the same. For example, the priest might say, "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good." Your response would be, **"His mercy endures forever."**

### 9. Dismissal

The priest will conclude, often saying, **"Go in peace."**

# Examination of Conscience

A necessary preparation for our encounter with Christ in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the Examination of Our Conscience in light of the **Ten Commandments** to see what we have done (*sins of commission*) and what we have failed to do (*sins of omission*) in relation to our call to love God, others, and ourselves. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the truth as you look at yourself in light of the questions below.

## The Ten Commandments

**1. I, The Lord, am your God; you shall not have other gods besides me.**

*What thoughts, habits, desires, and possessions have become false gods in your life?*

**2. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.**

*How have you fallen short of living in deep reverence to God's Holy Name and Majesty?*

**3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.**

*Are you worshipping God at Mass and honoring God through your activities on Sunday?*

**4. Honor your father and your mother.**

*How can you commit more quality time to build and enhance your family relationships?*

**5. You shall not kill.**

*How are you actively promoting the sanctity of life from conception until natural death?*

**6. You shall not commit adultery.**

*How are you tempted to use God's sacred design for sex and sexuality in selfish ways?*

**7. You shall not steal.**

*How are you working to assure that all people have the necessities to live and grow?*

**8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

*How can you promote honesty, goodness, and truth in your daily words and actions?*

**9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.**

*How has your heart been tempted toward impure thoughts and desires?*

**10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

*How have you replaced dependence upon God with the attachment to material goods?*