

General Confession



For Use at Holy Ascension Orthodox Mission in Melbourne, Victoria.
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**HOLY ASCENSION
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION**

www.ascensionorthodox.org

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This project is still in draft and continues as a work-in-progress.

General Confession

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord, my God, I confess before You all my sins which I have committed by word, deed, thought and all my senses.

I have sinned before You, O Lord:

By little faith: doubts often overcome my soul and my life and I rely more on people and on myself, than on You, O Lord my God.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by my passionate attachment to worldly goods, joys and pleasures. Worldly and sinful things are dearer and sweeter to my heart than heavenly, spiritual and holy things.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by laziness in praying and by forgetting all about You, O Lord my God! I pray unwillingly and distractedly and for hours and even days on end I do not remember You, my heavenly Father.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by missing church services: as soon as I am to go to church I find all sorts of allegedly urgent matters needing attention and preventing me from attending the service.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by irreverent standing in church: during the Divine Service it is often only my body present in the church; my soul does not listen to the prayers, does not converse with God, but is carried far away to the cares, affairs and preoccupations of the world.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by failing to observe feast days and church fasts: often I spend feast days as I would ordinary days, without praying and given to worldly affairs and pastimes; on fast days I am given to intemperance.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by being ungrateful to You, O Lord: when I do not receive from You what I ask, I grumble, and when I do receive, I fail to thank You.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by despondency: I am impatient in my sorrows and misfortunes. I lose reliance on Your help, O Lord, and often succumb to despondency and even despair.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by idle talking and laughing, by indecent jokes unbecoming a Christian, and even by foul language.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by lack of restraint in food and drink, by eating a lot and enjoying sweet things; sometimes by over-eating and drunkenness.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by self-love, vanity and pride. I always consider myself better than anyone else and I like to be praised and thought of higher than others.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by being envious when another person lives better than I do.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by being greedy: whatever I have does not seem to be enough. I want to acquire more and more, and I do not feel like sharing my goods with those in need.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by remembering wrongs: it takes me a long time to forget and forgive when someone has offended me.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by ill-will: I often wish evil to my enemies and rivals.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by experiencing malicious joy: I gloat over misfortunes or accidents of an enemy, or someone who has offended me.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by being wrathful and irritable towards both strangers and those who are close and dear to me.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by judging and condemning my neighbors and by deriding them.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by having a sinful pleasure in spreading spiteful rumors, censures and even slander directed at my neighbors.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by deceiving my neighbors, by telling them lies and flattery with self-interest in mind; by making and breaking promises, by appropriating other people's possessions, goods, money and food.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by offending people close to me in so many ways. I have offended my parents, my father, mother, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, children, other relatives, friends and strangers. I have offended them by rude and harsh words, by deeds and acts. I offended them at home, on the road, intentionally, consciously and unconsciously.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by impure, foul, lustful thoughts, looks of my eyes, words and deeds.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by defiling my body and all my senses with indecent, sinful acts which I am ashamed even to name.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by disrespect to my parents, particularly in my youth.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by failing to care for my relatives and people close to me.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned by being uncharitable towards the destitute and poor; by lack of compassion for those who needed help.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

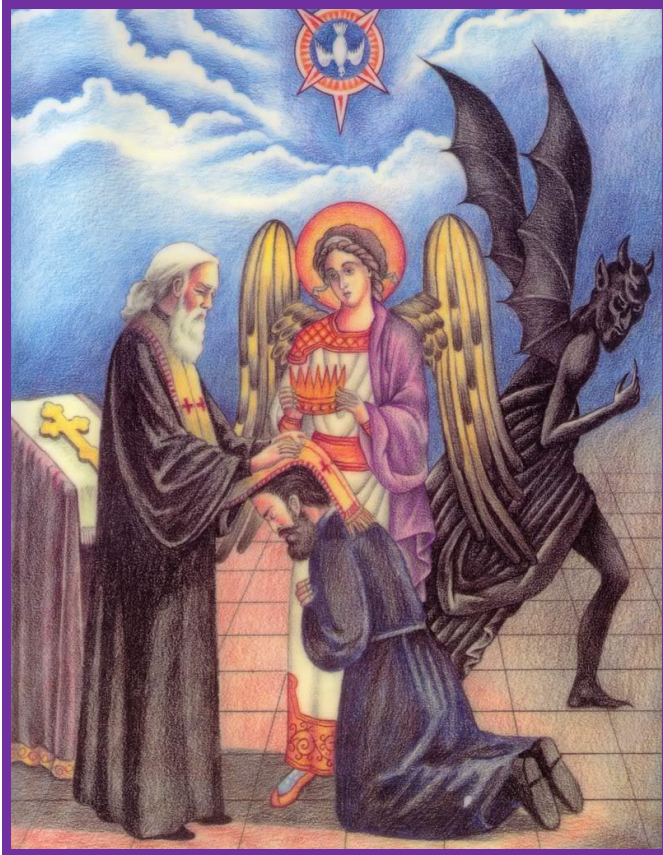
Priest: I have sinned by being cruel to animals and other creatures of God.

People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!

Priest: I have sinned countlessly, O Lord, by words and deeds, in knowledge and in ignorance, consciously and unconsciously, by day or night, and every hour.

O merciful Lord, have mercy on me and forgive all my countless sins, both those that I remember this day and hour, and those which I have forgotten and did not recall, but which I now repent with grief and ask to be forgiven.

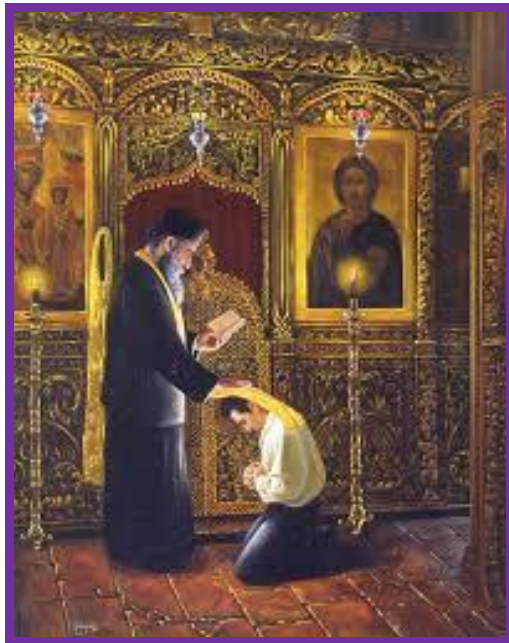
People: Lord, have mercy and forgive me!



An Exhortation Prior to Confession

Priest:

Behold, my child, Christ stands here invisibly and receives your confession: therefore, do not be ashamed, neither be afraid, and conceal nothing from me: but tell me, without any doubt, all things which you have done: so that you may have pardon from our Lord Jesus Christ. Look, His holy image is before us: and I am but a witness, bearing testimony before him of all things which you say to me. But if you conceal anything from me, you will have the greater sin. Therefore be careful lest having come to the Physician, you depart unhealed.



Brief Confession

I confess to the Lord my God and before you, reverend father, all my countless sins which I have committed until the present day and hour: in thought, word, and deed. Every day and every hour I sin through ingratitude to God for His great and numberless blessings to me and His most gracious providence and care for me, a sinner.

I have sinned through idle talk, condemnation of others, scorn, insubordination, pride, unkindness, envy, anger, slander, inattention, carelessness, negligence, impudence, discourtesy, irritability, sloth, despondency, resentment, remembrance of wrongs, paying back evil with evil, violence, obduracy, disobedience, grumbling, self-justification, contradiction, independence, self-will, reproachfulness, evil speaking, lying, laughing, tempting, self-love, ambition, fastidiousness, gluttony, excess in eating and drinking, eating and drinking in secret, drunkenness, attachment to things, conceit, laziness, harboring of licentious unclean thoughts, entertaining them and taking pleasure in them, sensual imaginings, daydreams and issues. I have sinned through excessive sleeping, impure glances, omitting divine service from laziness or neglect, dozing and whispering in church, arriving late for the beginning of church services, inattention during prayer in church and in private, not fulfilling properly the rule of private prayer.

I have sinned in thought, word and deed and by sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, and by my other spiritual and bodily senses. But I repent of these sins and ask forgiveness.

Here it is necessary to mention, also, other sins, if you have anything special on your conscience.

I also repent and ask forgiveness for everything which I have not confessed through ignorance or forgetfulness.

Forgive and absolve me, reverend father, and bless me to partake of the Holy and Life-giving Mysteries of Christ for the remission of my sins and for eternal life.



Absolution

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

O Lord God of the salvation of your servants, gracious, bountiful and long-suffering, who grieves because of our evil deeds, and does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that they should turn from wickedness and live (Ezekiel 33: 11): Show your mercy now upon your servant, *N.*, and grant him (*her*) an image of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance, pardoning his (*her*) every transgression, whether voluntary or involuntary. Reconcile and unite him (*her*) to your holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom also are due to you dominion and majesty, now, and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

May God Who pardoned David through the prophet Nathan when he confessed his sins, and may God who pardoned Peter who wept bitterly for his denial, and may God who forgave the Harlot weeping at His feet, forgive you all things, through me a sinner, now and forever and to the ages of ages, and present you uncondemned before His terrifying Judgment. Now, having no further care for the sins which you have confessed (*in your heart*), depart in peace.

How Everyone Should Prepare Before Confession

An Excerpt from Exomologetarion (A Manual of Confession)

by St Nikodemos the Hagiorite

What is repentance?

My brother sinner, this is the preparation you must undergo before you repent and go to confession. Know firstly that repentance, according to St John of Damascus, is a returning from the devil to God, which comes about through pain and asceticism.

So you also, my beloved, if you wish to repent properly, must depart from the devil and from diabolical works and return to God and to the life proper to God. You must forsake sin, which is against nature, and return to virtue, which is according to nature. You must hate wickedness so much, that you say along with David: "Unrighteousness have I hated and abhorred" (Psalm 118:163), and instead, you must love the good and the commandments of the Lord so much, that you also say along with David: "But Your law have I loved" (ibid.), and again: "Therefore have I loved Your commandments more than gold and topaz" (Psalm 118:127). In brief, the Holy Spirit informs you through the wise Sirach what in fact true repentance is, saying: "Turn to the Lord and forsake your sins... Return to the Most High, and turn away from iniquity, and hate abominations intensely" (Sirach 17:25-26).

The aspects of repentance

Know secondly that the aspects of repentance are three: contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Contrition

Contrition is sorrow and perfect grief of the heart, which

comes about in a person who, on account of the sins committed, disappointed God and transgressed His divine Law. This contrition comes only to the perfect and those who are sons of God, because it only proceeds from the love for God, just as a son repents simply because he disappointed his father, and not because he was deprived of his inheritance or because he will be ousted from his father's house. Concerning this the divine Chrysostom says: "Groan after you have sinned, not because you are to be punished (for this is nothing), but because you have offended your Master, one so gentle, one so kind, one who loves you so much and longs for your salvation as to have given even His Son for you. On account of this, groan."

Affliction

Related to contrition is affliction, which is also a sorrow and imperfect grief of the heart, which comes about, not because a person disappointed God by his sins, but because that person was deprived of divine grace, lost Paradise, and gained hell. This affliction belongs to the imperfect, that is, to the hired hands and slaves, because it proceeds not out of love for God, but out of fear and out of love for themselves, just as a hired hand repents on account of losing his wage and a slave repents because he fears the disciplines of his master.

So you also, my brother sinner, if you wish to acquire this contrition and affliction in your heart, and through these for your repentance to be pleasing to God, you must do the following.

Confess to an Experienced Spiritual Father

First, search around and learn who is the most experienced Spiritual Father, because Basil the Great says, just as people do not show their maladies and bodily wounds to just any physician, but to experienced physicians who know how to treat them, so also sins must be revealed, not to just anyone, but to those who are able to heal them: "The same fashion should be observed in the confession of sins as in the showing of bodily diseases. As then men reveal the diseases of the body not to all or to chance comers but to those who are experienced in their treatment; so also the confession of sins ought to take place in the presence of those who are able to treat them, as it is written: 'You who are strong bear the infirmities of the weak' (Romans 15:1) - that is, take them away by your care."

How One is to Examine his conscience

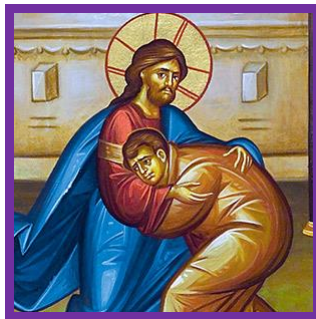
Second, just as you would sit down and count your money after a certain business transaction, in like manner go to a particular place, my brother, and two or three weeks before going to the Spiritual Father you found, especially at the beginning of the four fast periods of the year, sit down in that place of quietude, and bowing your head, examine your conscience, which Philo the Jew calls: "The testing of the conscience," and become: "Not a defender, but a judge of your sins," according to the divine Augustine. Consider, like Hezekiah, the whole span of your life in sorrow and bitterness of soul: "I will ponder all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isaiah 38:15).

Consider also how many sins you committed in deed, word, and by coupling with thoughts, after you last confessed, counting the months, weeks, and days. Remember the people

with whom you sinned and the places where you sinned, and diligently reflect upon these things in order to find every one of your sins. This is how the wise Sirach counsels you from one side saying: "Before judgment, examine yourself" (Sirach 18:20), and from the other, Gregory the Theologian says: "Examine yourself more than your neighbor. Account of actions is superior to an account of money. For money is subject to corruption, but actions remain."

And just as hunters are not satisfied with merely finding a beast in the forest, but attempt through every means to also kill it, likewise, my brother sinner, you should also not be satisfied with merely examining your conscience and with finding your sins, for this profits you little, but struggle by every means to kill your sins through the grief in your heart, namely, through contrition and affliction. And in order to acquire contrition, consider how much you have wronged God through your sins. In order to also acquire affliction, consider how much you have wronged yourself through your sins.

From Part III, Chapter 1 of Exomologetarion (A Manual of Confession), by St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (Thessaloniki, Greece: 2006, Uncut Mountain Press).



Practical Aspects of Confession

In this fallen world, full of temptations and misguidance, the importance of Confession in our spiritual lives is greater than ever. This is why it is important to list here a few practical aspects which time and again we tend to forget.

First of all, before you come to confession try to make a proper preparation. Examine your life carefully, using as a help the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes. If necessary, write out a list and bring it with you to confession. Try not to omit anything you might have a tendency to judge as not important. It is up to the Father Confessor to judge this.

Remember that no sin is too small to be confessed and no sin is so great that it cannot be forgiven by God, if true repentance exists. In confessing, try to be brief and concise and, although sometimes necessarily explaining the circumstances of a particular sin, refrain from excusing yourself or confessing the sins of others. Some people like to tell a good story: this is not necessary. Some even preach sermons in confession, but this too is not the purpose of confession. Let the Father Confessor do that if necessary.

Often many people come to confession at the same time and the priest has to hear several confessions, so others will be waiting their turn. In this case try to be considerate of their time. If you have some personal difficulties or some particularly troublesome problems in your spiritual life, and need to discuss them at length, then arrange for a special

time that the priest can dedicate only to you. Sometimes after Confessions the priest may recommend you what is called a penance. This may represent the reading of certain prayers, a rule for fasting, a number of prostrations, how to further dedicate yourself to God and to the service of the Body of Christ. Remember that this is not a punishment for your sins, but it is a necessary spiritual medicine, a prescription for your spiritual healing. If you understand its importance and accept it, you are bound to follow it as closely as possible. Any changes to it should be discussed with your Father Confessor.

Overall come to Confession with an open soul, and remember, that the one that repents and comes to receive the Sacrament of Confession properly, does not limit only to confess his/her sins, but also commits to unceasingly fight against sin and passions. Confession is not an end in itself but is rather a new beginning of a new life in Christ.



A Preparation for Confession

by St John of Kronstadt

I, a sinful soul, confess to our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, all of my evil acts which I have done, said or thought from the day of my baptism until today.

I have not kept the vows of my baptism, but have made myself unwanted before the face of God.

I have sinned before the Lord by lack of faith and by doubts concerning the Orthodox Faith and the Holy Church; by ungratefulness for all of God's great and unceasing gifts; His long-suffering and His providence for me, a sinner; by lack of love for the Lord, as well as fear, through not fulfilling the Holy Commandments of God and the canons and rules of the Church.

I have not preserved a love for God and for my neighbor. Nor have I made enough efforts, because of laziness and lack of care, to learn the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Holy Fathers.

I have sinned: by not praying in the morning and in the evening and in the course of the day; by not attending the Divine Services or by coming to Church only half-heartedly, lazily and carelessly; by conversing during the Divine Services, by not paying attention, letting my mind wander and by departure from the Church before the dismissal and blessing.

I have sinned by judging members of the clergy and monastics.

I have sinned by not respecting the Feasts, breaking the Fasts, and by immoderation in food and drink.

I have sinned by self-importance, disobedience, willfulness, self-righteousness, and the seeking of approval and praise.

I have sinned by unbelief, lack of faith, doubts, despair, despondency, abusive thoughts, blasphemy and swearing.

I have sinned by pride, a high opinion of myself, narcissism, vanity, conceit, envy, love of praise and love of honors.

I have sinned: by judging, malicious gossip, anger, remembering of offences done to me, hatred and returning evil for evil; by slander, reproaches, lies, slyness, deception and hypocrisy; by prejudices, arguments, stubbornness, and an unwillingness to give way to my neighbor; by gloating, spitefulness, taunting, insults and mocking; by gossip, by speaking too much and by empty speech.

I have sinned by unnecessary and excessive laughter, by reviling and dwelling upon my previous sins, by arrogant behavior, insolence and lack of respect.

I have sinned by not keeping my physical and spiritual passions in check, by my enjoyment of impure thoughts, licentiousness and unchastity in thoughts, words and deeds.

I have sinned by lack of endurance towards my illnesses and sorrows, a devotion to the comforts of life and by being too attached to my parents, children, relatives and friends.

I have sinned by hardening my heart, having a weak will and by not forcing myself to do good.

I have sinned by miserliness, a love of money, the acquisition of unnecessary things and immoderate attachment to things.

I have sinned by self-justification, a disregard for the admonitions of my conscience and failing to confess my sins through negligence or false pride.

I have sinned many times by my Confession: belittling, justifying and keeping silent about sins.

I have sinned against the Most-holy and Life-creating Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord by coming to Holy Communion without humility or the fear of God.

I have sinned in action, word and thought, knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly, thoughtfully and thoughtlessly, and it is impossible to enumerate all of my sins because of their multitude. But I truly repent of these and all others not mentioned by me because of my forgetfulness and I ask that they be forgiven through the abundance of the Mercy of God.

ACCESSORIES TO SIN

By counseling, by commanding, by consenting, by provoking another to sin; by praise of flattery, by concealment, by silence, or by defending that which is wrong.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
WHEN PREPARING FOR CONFESSION**

Have you prayed to God upon rising and before eating and sleeping?

During prayer were you distracted by other thoughts?

Did you make the sign of the Cross carelessly?

Have you attended Church services regularly?

When in Church, have you been inattentive, laughed or talked unnecessarily?

Have you used the name of the Lord in swearing or in a joking way?

Have you sworn or murmured against God?

Have you been ashamed to make the sign of the Cross in front of others?

Have you attended parties, movies, etc. during the hours of Church services?

Have you failed to keep the fast or other rules of the Church?

Have you believed in astrology, superstitions, fortune-tellers or the like?

Have you strayed from the teachings of the Church by unbelief or indifference to the Faith?

Have you failed to ask for God's help in every effort?

Have you concealed sins at confession?

Do you show your parents proper respect? Have you been rude to them, talked back or otherwise offended them?

If your parents are reposed, have you prayed for them?

Have you been disrespectful to members of the clergy, your elders, teachers or superiors?

Have you been angry or irritated?

Have you abused anyone? Used foul language? Struck someone? Offended someone in an argument?

Have you raised your voice in anger?

Have you joked or made fun of the handicapped, unfortunate, or elderly?

Are you truly at peace with everyone?

Have you asked forgiveness of those you may have offended?

Have you failed to give aid to someone in need, especially when asked?

Have you donated to the needs of the Church?

Have you been cruel to animals?

Have you taken something without asking?

Have you failed to return a book or other thing that you have borrowed?

Have you been stubborn, insistent on pressing your point of view?

Have you plotted or taken revenge on one who's offended you?

Have you told falsehoods, distorted the truth, cheated, judged others or gossiped?

Have you joked of the faults of others, or exposed the faults of another to make yourself the better?

Have you been vain? Sought glory or praise for yourself?

Does your inner peace disappear when others are unfair to you or judge you?

Are you proud? Do you brag of your abilities, position or possessions? Do you consider yourself worthy or sinless in the sight of God?

Have you been overly concerned with your appearance? Are you properly attired in God's house?

The 7th commandment includes all sins of a sexual nature, either by thought, word, or deed, any of these must be confessed.

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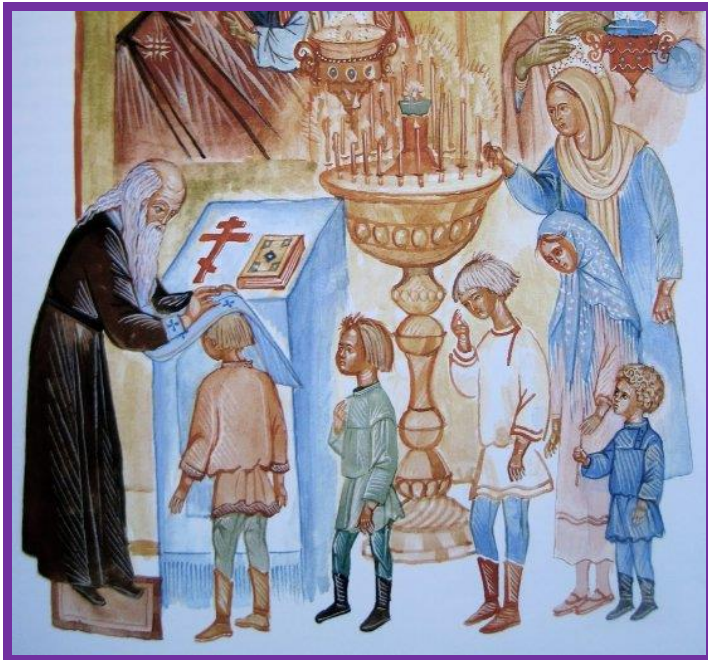
Have you been envious of another's possessions, appearance or standing?

Have you fulfilled all obligations faithfully? Have you been lazy?

Have you been impatient? Fallen into despair or apathy? Had thoughts of suicide?

Are you attached to smoking, alcohol, or other drugs? Food or drink?

Do you give up your heart to money or other earthly possessions?



Proper Confession and Communion

Proper Confession

Before confession one should attempt to recall all the sins which one has committed voluntarily or involuntarily. One must attentively re-examine one's life in order to recall not only those sins committed since the last confession, but also those which have not been confessed through forgetfulness. Then, with compunction and a contrite heart, approach the Cross and the Gospel and begin the confession of your sins.

1. Confess your sins honestly, remembering that you open them not to a man, but to God Himself. God knows your sins already and only wants your admission of them. You should not be embarrassed before your spiritual father: he is a person just as you are. He knows human shortcomings well, man's tendency towards sin. For this reason your spiritual father cannot be your terrible judge at confession. Is the reason that you are embarrassed before your spiritual father that you are afraid to lose his good opinion of you? On the contrary, your spiritual father will have all the more love for you when he sees your open, honest confession. Furthermore, if you are afraid to reveal your sins before just one person, your spiritual father, how will you overcome your embarrassment when you appear at God's Last Judgment? There, all your sins which you have not confessed will be opened before God Himself.

2. Be specific when you confess, listing all your sins separately. St John Chrysostom says: "One must not only say: I have sinned, or I am sinful, but one must declare each type of sin." "The revelation of sins," says St Basil the Great, "is subject to the same law as the declaration of physical

ills..." The sinner is spiritually ill, and the spiritual father is the physician or healer. It stands to reason that one must confess or tell about one's sins in the same way as one who is physically ill describes the symptoms of his illness to a physician from whom he expects to receive healing.

3. Do not mention anyone else during confession, i.e. do not complain about anyone - what sort of confession is this? It is not confession, but judgment and a new sin.

4. Do not attempt to justify yourself in any way during confession: blaming weakness, custom, etc. The more one justifies himself during confession, the less one is justified by God. The more one denounces, judges and accuses oneself, the more one is justified in the eyes of God.

5. When questioned by your spiritual father, do not say: "I can't remember, maybe I committed that sin." God commanded us to always remember our sins. In order not to justify ourselves with not remembering, we must confess our sins as often as possible. Those who, because of carelessness, confess and take communion infrequently, and because of this forget their sins, have no one to blame but themselves. They cannot hope for remission of the sins which they failed to confess. Thus, it is imperative that we try to recall all our sins. When someone owes us something we are sure to remember this. Yet we forget our own debts before God! Does this not reveal an utter absence of concern for our soul on our part?

6. Unless asked by your spiritual father, do not list the sins you have not committed or things you have not done. Doing this, you liken yourself to the Pharisee of the Gospel. You do

not confess your sins, but boast, thereby increasing your judgment.

7. We must confess with sorrow and a contrite heart the sins by which we have grieved our Lord God. It is not good that many tell of their sins matter-of-factly, without any remorse. They speak as though they are engaged in some casual conversation. What is worse, some even allow themselves to laugh during confession. These are all signs of unrepentedness. Confessing in this manner, we do not cleanse ourselves of our sins, but rather increase them.

8. Finally, confess your sins with faith in Jesus Christ, with hope in His mercy. Only with faith in Jesus Christ and hope in Him can we receive forgiveness of our sins. Without faith, we cannot receive remission. An example of this is Judas the traitor—who was remorseful of what he did, but did not have faith in Jesus, no hope in His mercy, and thus ended his own life. This then, is how we must confess in order to receive remission of our sins from our Lord God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9)

Prayerful Preparation for Communion

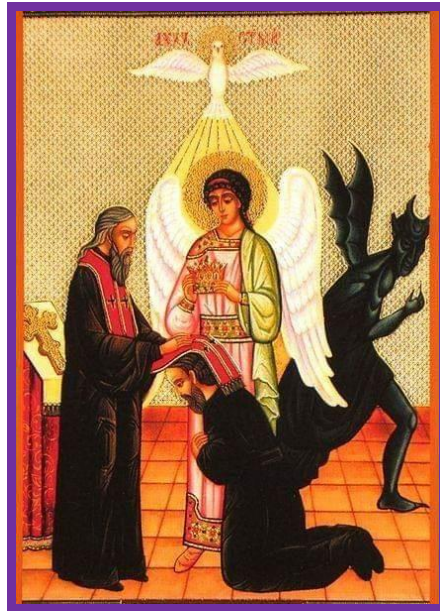
Of all of the days in the life of a Christian, the happiest is the day on which we receive Holy Communion worthily, with complete attentiveness and preparation. Through confession, we have washed ourselves of all sins, opened before the Lord our entire soul, and received into the house of our soul the Holy Heavenly Guest, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said "He who eats of My Body and drinks of My Blood abides in Me and I in him."

On the day on which we receive Communion, it is extremely important for us to recognize what we are doing, and in participating in the awesome Mystery, to understand what responsibility we are taking upon ourselves. To receive the Divine Guest carelessly, without the requisite attention, is to condemn ourselves. May it not be so! Here is the minimum that is essential for us to do in order to derive spiritual benefit.

- 1.** Confess on the eve of the Liturgy, in order to give yourself and your spiritual father time for a complete confession.
- 2.** Read the Prayer Rule before Holy Communion. The Rule consists of a series of Psalms, a Canon, and Prayers before Communion. The more zealous may add to this rule the Canon to Sweetest Jesus, the Canon and Akathist to the Most-holy Theotokos, and the Canon to the Guardian Angel.
- 3.** On the day of Holy Communion, it is essential to come to the church by the beginning of the Liturgy, and on an empty stomach, i.e. having abstained since midnight from food and drink, as well as from smoking.
- 4.** We ask parishioners to ensure that when they commune, they not wear any lip balms or lipstick.
- 5.** The Church instructs those who approach for Communion to cross their arms over their breast, and to approach with lips confessing Christ, and hearts filled with a fervent love for Him and with thanksgiving. In 681, the 6th Ecumenical Council established this Canon: "Whosoever wishes to partake... let him form his hands into the shape of a cross, and thus approaching, let him receive the communion of grace.... (Canon 101).

6. In the instructions for the Order of Service it is stated that upon receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, we swallow them with reverence, and then wipe our lips on the red communion cloth and then consume a piece of antidoron (blessed bread) as a way of swallowing any remaining Holy Communion that may still be in our mouth.

7. After Communion, read the thanksgiving prayers. At our church, these prayers are always read while parishioners are venerating the Holy Cross. The Food of the Mystical Supper is the Heavenly Food of our restoration, of the New Testament between God and mankind. Whoever receives this food without due preparation brings on the opposite—destruction. May it not be so!



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