

23. Do you dress modestly? Do you enter holy places dressed discretely? Perhaps you reject Christian modesty out of pride or rebelliousness, thereby setting a false example for others?

24. Perhaps you take part in sinful dancing? Do you sing or listen to immoral music, dedicating your lips and ears to the flesh, rather than to the praise of God?

25. Perhaps you drink heavily, or pollute yourself with cigarettes or drugs? These things destroy the temple of the body made by God, and are a sinful waste of money.

FOR COUPLES

1. Are you loyal to your spouse, in body as well as in your thoughts?

2. The one whom you call spouse - has your marriage been blessed by God in His Holy Church, or are you living in the sins of the flesh? The Lord seeks to preserve and strengthen us through Holy Matrimony.

3. Perhaps you offended or saddened your spouse in the presence of others or privately?

4. Perhaps you encourage your husband or wife to follow passing fashions, to pursue luxurious living, or to waste the precious time of your life in parties.

5. Are you sensitive to the struggles of the other spouse, inside or outside the house? Do you make an effort to recognize and support each other in these struggles, thus providing comfort to each other psychologically, emotionally, and physically?

6. Perhaps you have been overly demanding with your husband or wife?

7. Perhaps you discourage your husband or wife from going to Church, praying, or reading or listening to spiritual materials?

8. Do you raise your children with the teachings and in the way of the Lord? Have you put their physical or academic pursuits ahead of their spiritual well-being?

9. Do you take your children to Church, to Holy Confession, to Sunday School, and to frequent Holy Communion? Do you teach them with words and with exemplary virtues? Do you teach them to pray morning and night, and also at mealtime, with seriousness and devotion?

10. Are you aware of the things your children read and watch? Perhaps you leave your children unattended for long periods of time with the television or on the Internet? Do you provide them with solid Christian alternatives for their time?

11. Are you aware of the people with whom your children associate, and whom they have as friends?

12. Have you been taking them to sinful shows or movies?

13. Do you teach your children and others humility, and are you actively concerned that they dress modestly?

14. Perhaps you curse your children when they aggravate you?

15. Perhaps you had an abortion to avoid bearing children, or encouraged someone else to have an abortion?

16. Have you been unjust with your children with the distribution of your property?

17. Do you spend a significant amount of time with your children, and around your children? When it comes to raising a faithful child, there is no such thing as "quality time" - only quantity of time.

18. Perhaps you abuse your children verbally, or scold them with indecent words?

19. Do you honour and love the parents and relatives of your spouse? Have you allowed your parents to interfere in your home life, and become a source of dissension between you and your husband or wife?

20. Perhaps you interfere in the home life of your adult children?

21. Perhaps your spouse is a blasphemer? Be patient and pray, that they may quit the evil of blasphemy.

Brothers and Sisters:

Do you see how many things you have to consider? How much you will still discover when you stay all by yourself and wish to.... search deep inside yourself!

Do not neglect this Holy Mystery of Confession, the greatest gift that you can and should offer to yourself, and to others.

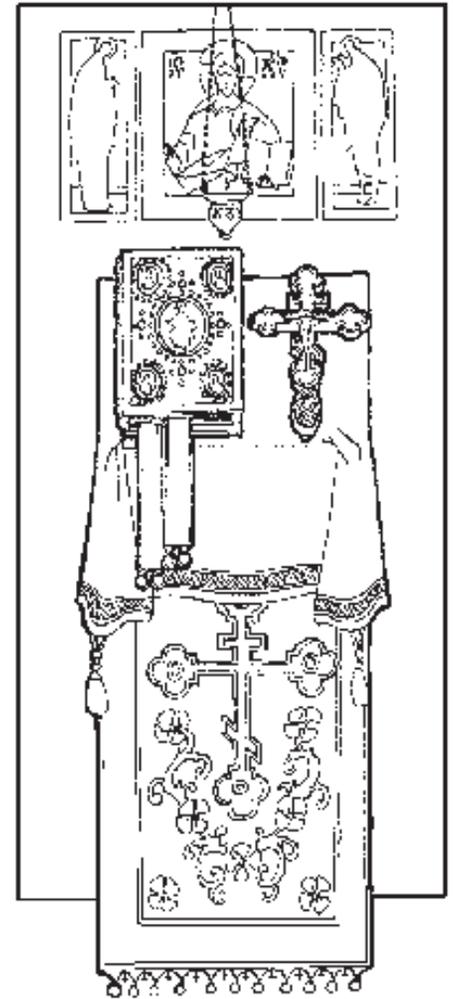
May our All-Good God enlighten you and strengthen you on this uphill but beautiful path, which passes through Holy Confession, and leads to Heaven.

All Saints of North America
Orthodox Church

HAMILTON · ONTARIO · CANADA



A Guide to Confession



*Practical Questions
for Orthodox Christians
preparing for Confession*

As we approach the Holy Mystery of Confession, it is sometimes helpful to look back on the path walked by the holy people of our Orthodox Faith, and consider the way in which such holy people searched their soul as they approached the Lord. May God grant that the questions given below may serve as a help as we prepare for Confession before the Lord and our spiritual father, to the enlightening of our spiritual mind, and to the forgiveness of our sins.

YOU AND GOD

1. Do you believe in God the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in the one Holy Orthodox Church and her Holy Mysteries? Do you believe in the existence of Paradise and Hell?
2. Do you entrust yourself at all times to the Providence of God, or do you become discouraged and show a lack of faith?
3. At times of affliction, illness, or personal trials, do you grumble against God and lose your faith and courage?
4. Perhaps you believe in psychics, card readers, astrologers, and horoscopes? Have you advised others to take refuge in these?
5. Perhaps you hold to superstitions, “bad omens” or “unlucky” numbers, such as the number 13, crossing the path of a black cat, or spilling salt? Perhaps you believe in “luck”?
6. Do you pray in the morning and evening, and at mealtime? Perhaps you are embarrassed to make the sign of the Cross in public?
7. Do you study the Scriptures, and other spiritual books that reflect the teachings of the Orthodox Christian Faith? Perhaps you “mix in” teachings from non-Orthodox sources? Perhaps you dismiss religious books, or leave them in disrespectful places?
8. Do you attend Church on Sundays and feast days? Do you arrive in time, and stay throughout the services?
9. Do you go to Church dressed modestly? Are you careful not to carry on worldly or frivolous conversation during the services or in the Church?
10. Perhaps you hinder family members from attending Church? Do you encourage others to attend Church?
11. Do you receive Holy Communion regularly, having prepared through fasting from the night before, attending the Vigil, saying Prayers Before Communion, and having Confessed at least once a month?
12. Do you swear? Perhaps you do not keep promises you have made to God, even promises made in your heart?
13. Perhaps you blaspheme the name of Christ, the Mother of God, or the saints? Perhaps you joke about sacred things?
14. Do you fast, as your health allows, on Wednesdays and Fridays, and during fasting periods? If not, why not?
15. Perhaps you have reproached a priest, a monastic, or some other person. Perhaps you have ignored the faithful direction of your confessor, or presume you know better than the direction

given you by the Lord through Holy Confession?

16. Do you give one tenth of your income to the Church in the form of a tithe? If not, why not? How much of your money do you provide for God’s work?

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

1. Perhaps you have hatred toward someone who has treated you badly or insulted you?
2. Perhaps you are suspicious of others, their thoughts or intentions about you?
3. Perhaps you get jealous about the progress, the happiness, the beauty, or the goods of others?
4. Perhaps you are unmoved by the misfortune or needs of your neighbour? Do you give to the poor, to orphans, to the elderly, the large and financially struggling families you know?
5. In your everyday dealings with coworkers or clients, are you honest, straightforward, sincere, and upright?
6. Perhaps you have slandered or accused another?
7. Perhaps you speak sarcastically about the devout Christian life of other people? Perhaps you joke about those who have spiritual or physical weaknesses?
8. Perhaps you overhear information or accusations about another person, and pass this on as gossip, rather than holding your tongue?
9. Perhaps you have cursed another person, or in discouragement or anger, cursed the day and hour of your birth?
10. Perhaps you verbally send people “to Hell”, or use insulting hand gestures?
11. Do you respect your parents? Do you care for them, and have patience with their elderly weaknesses, if they have any? Do you help them with their physical and spiritual needs? Do you take them to Church? Perhaps you have deserted them, or treat them with indifference?
12. Perhaps you have influenced your parents to give you special consideration regarding inheritance?
13. Perhaps you’ve struck someone, or abused them verbally?
14. Do you carry on your vocation with integrity?
15. Do you steal? Perhaps you cover up the thefts of others, or take liberties in order to avoid paying taxes?
16. Perhaps you are thankless to God, or to those that are good to you?
17. Perhaps you spend time with the wrong crowd, and are involved in sinful relations? Perhaps you moved someone to sin, either by your example, persuasion, or temptations created by you?
18. Perhaps you have committed forgery, or taken advantage of the Public or the government? Perhaps you borrowed objects or money and failed to return them?

19. Did you every commit murder in any way?

20. Did you become involved in the private life of others, their work, or their family, causing arguments?

YOURSELF

1. Have you been attached to material things and worldly goods?
2. Have you been stingy and a lover of money?
3. Have you been greedy?
4. Have you been a spendthrift? Your surplus belongs to the poor; your tithe belongs to God.
5. Have you been conceited?
6. Perhaps you like to show off your clothes, your wealth, your success or your child’s success?
7. Perhaps you crave admiration from those around you? Perhaps you accept praise with pleasure?
8. Perhaps you get upset when someone points out your mistakes or your faults, or you feel hurt when reprimanded or corrected by your superiors?
9. Perhaps you are stubborn, obstinate, egotistical, selfish, and self-centred? Pay attention to these sins - it is difficult to get rid of them, and if left unattended, they will grow.
10. Do you play cards - even though you may not use money - or engage in other useless activities in order to “kill time”?
11. Perhaps you are obsessed with the latest news, and cannot break away from the radio, television, or Internet?
12. Have you polluted your body with carnal sins? Perhaps you entertain lustful thoughts from images you have seen, or spend time alone looking at images that provoke lustful thoughts. This is planting the seeds of later sins.
13. Have you looked at obscene books and magazines?
14. Perhaps you have entertained lustful thoughts, or engaged in lustful acts contrary to nature?
15. Have you ever considered suicide?
16. Perhaps you have been gluttonous, eating when you are already full?
17. Perhaps you have used obscene, insulting, or improper words for the sake of being comical, or to insult or humiliate another person?
18. Have you been lazy, insolent, or negligent?
19. Do you have a spirit of self denial? Do you live your life in such a way that, with God’s help, you cultivate such a spirit in your heart?
20. Do you expel from your mind any bad thoughts that come to pollute your mind?
21. Do you control your eyes so that they don’t curiously examine provocative pictures or people?
22. Do you control what goes into your ears?