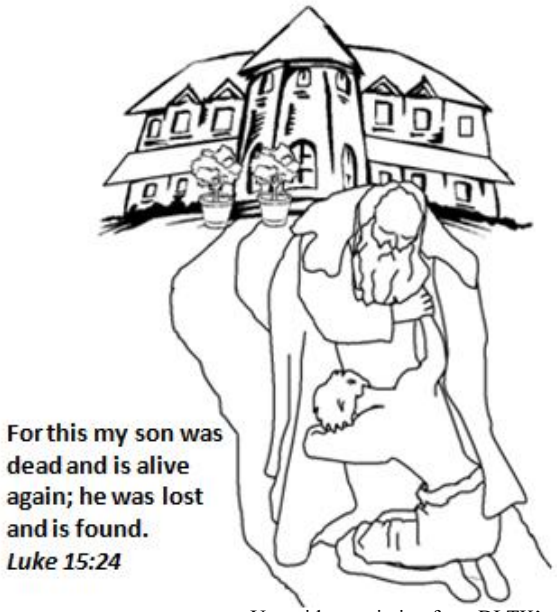
The Mystery of Repentance
A Ukrainian Catholic Guide to Confession
For Adults

Do you remember the prodigal son? He had left his home and family looking for something new and exciting. He spent many months doing all the wrong things. When all his money was gone and life became very hard, he decided to go home. Life, he knew, was better there, even for the servants.



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The son returned to his father, and told him the truth about everything he had done. He was not afraid. He knew his father loved him.

We, as God's children also need to say," I have made a mistake; I have sinned. Father, I have offended you; my God, I am sorry; I ask for pardon; I will try again, because I rely on your strength and I believe in your love." (John Paul II)

Behold, my child, Christ stands here invisibly and receives your confession. Therefore do not be ashamed, do not be afraid, hide nothing from Him; but tell Him without hesitation all the things you have done, and so you shall have pardon from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Coming Clean:
Why we need to tell our sins

Why should we go to confession? When we were baptized, God completely forgave all our sins. Because of this, we are united as God's children and are members of his Church. When we sin, we break this union, so we need to go to confession to ask God to forgive us and to help us be better children. When we do this, we are again in union with God.

What is sin? We sin when we think, do or say things that hurt other people or ourselves: when we do this we also hurt God.

Why do we confess to a priest? The priest is present in the name of God. When we confess we are confessing to God, not the priest. The priest has been given to us to help us. He hears our confessions and forgives us in God's name. What we tell the priest is a secret, and he tells nobody what we tell him.
The priest teaches us about God's forgiveness and love, and tells us how to be better Christians. He usually asks us to say a prayer or two to make up for the wrong that was done. He may suggest that we do something else also, such as asking someone to forgive us or returning something that is not ours.

How often should we go to confession? We should go to confession whenever we feel that we have hurt somebody, ourselves or God. Because confession helps us to be good, we should go often.

How should you prepare for confession?

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to get ready for confession.
2. Thank God for everything He has given you (and He has given you ***everything***!)
3. Think about how you acted towards other people, animals, and the earth. What have you said or done that you shouldn't have? What have you ***not*** done or said that you should have? Using a guide such as the one in this pamphlet will help you to remember.
4. Thank God for all the good things you have done.
5. Be sorry for the bad things you have done or said. Remember that it is very important to promise to try not to do these things again. Pray for forgiveness. Say the act of contrition:
   Dear God, I am sorry I have ever thought, said, or done anything to offend you. You have been so good to me and I have been so ungrateful to You. Please forgive all my sins and I will really try, with Your help, not to displease You again.
6. If you have hurt anyone, ask their forgiveness.

Examination of Conscience for Adults

MY FAITH:

- Does God take first place in my life?
- Do I spend time each day with God, praying and asking God to strengthen my faith?
- Do I actively and whole-heartedly worship God each Sunday and Holy Day, or do I place more value on work, sports or other commitments?
- Do I arrive at church late and/or leave early?
- Do I do unnecessary work and shopping on Sunday?
- Do I try to make Sunday a family day and day of rest?
- Do I remember God's goodness and the gifts God has given me – my faith, my family, my health, my mind, and my friends?
- Do I misuse God's Holy Name through vulgar speech?
- Have I truly accepted Jesus as my Saviour and the Church as the means to eternal salvation?
- Do I stand up for my faith and for those in positions of faith leadership, or do I join in negative criticism?
- Have I made an effort to inform my conscience, to educate myself about the teachings of the Church?
- Have I denied or been ashamed of being Catholic?
- Have I been involved with the occult or superstitious practices?
- Have I been responsible in my use and care of the earth and its resources?
- Have I ever received Holy Communion while my relationship with God has been damaged by serious sin?
- Have I withheld or covered up my sins in Confession?

MY FAMILY:

- Do I communicate respectfully with my parents, always speaking the truth?
- Do I thank my parents for their goodness and concern?
- Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?
- Am I helpful in keeping peace and harmony in my family?
- Have I been a good religious example to my family?
- Have I neglected my children's spiritual upbringing?
- Have I failed to take my children to worship at church each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation?
- Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?
- Do I do anything to excess (gamble, work, drink…) that would deny my family their needs, either material or emotional?

MY FRIENDS AND MYSELF:

- Do I respect those in authority (priests, sisters, law enforcement, teachers, government, supervisors, etc)?
- Do I take my job seriously?
- Do I apologize quickly when I have wronged someone?
- Do I forgive quickly when I have been wronged?
- Am I selfish with my time, my things, and my talents?
- Am I too focused on material things?
- Do I share my time, my talent, my treasure with those less fortunate?
- Am I always truthful and honest in what I say?
- Am I jealous or envious of others' possessions, talents, or achievements?
- Do I hurt others by spreading rumours or speaking unkindly?
- Have I led others into sin by my bad example?
- Do I abuse my health or the health of others by the misuse of drugs or alcohol?
- Have I planned to or broken the law by using drugs?
- Have I driven under the influence of chemicals?
- Do I respect the gift of purity in myself and my spouse?
- Do I dress modestly?
- Am I preoccupied with myself by giving into masturbation or pornography?
- Am I lustful in my thoughts, words or actions?
- Have I been reckless with my choice of books, movies, internet and music?
- Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?
- Have I participated in homosexual activity?
- Have I been unfaithful to my spouse in thought, word or deed?
- Have I practiced any form of artificial birth control or contraception?
- Have I been sterilized for reasons of birth control?
- Have I damaged or stolen property?
- Have I cheated anyone?
- Have I destroyed human life by assisting or encouraging in any way with an abortion?
- Have I deliberately harmed anyone or wished them harm?
- Have I harmed myself?
- Has anything I have said or done caused another to sin?
- Am I trying to grow in awareness of God's call in my life?
- Am I resentful or bitter about where I am in life?

How to Celebrate the Mystery of Repentance
How to go to Confession

When you are ready to make your confession, go into the confessional and kneel.

Child: (+)In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Glory to Jesus Christ! (Slava Isusu Khrystu!)
Priest: Glory be forever! (Slava na viky!)
Child: I confess to Almighty God, One in the Holy Trinity, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to all the Saints, and to you, Father, all my sins.
Tell your sins to the priest. Tell the whole truth and don't make excuses. You may want to take a list with you to help you to remember what you want to say. If you have any questions or problems you should also talk about these. When you are finished say: **These are all the sins I remember. I am truly sorry for all my sins.**

Father will speak to you and tell you how you can be a better person and more like Jesus. When he is finished, he will ask you to make your act of penitence:

(+) God, be merciful to me a sinner.
(+) God cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me.
(+) I have sinned without number, forgive me, O Lord.

The priest will forgive your sins in the name of God, and he will bless you before you leave. After your confession, say the prayer Father has asked you to say or do what he has asked of you. Do this as soon as possible after your confession. Remember to thank God for His forgiveness and try to be a better person.