

C O N F E S S I O N

*All faithful are expected to approach Holy Confession before Pascha.
The following tips will help you prepare.*

Before confession, each person must attempt to recall all of his/her sins, both voluntary and involuntary, those committed since the last confession as well as those past sins which, through forgetfulness, have never been confessed. Prayer and fasting help the penitent remember and recognize his /her sinfulness. Then, with compunction and with a contrite heart, approach the Cross and the Gospel and begin to confess your sins. If you have not been to confession in a long time and are unsure of yourself on how to begin, do not be afraid. Tell the priest and he will help you.

1. Confess your sins honestly, remembering that you are disclosing them not to a man but to God Himself, Who already knows your sins, but wishes you to admit to them. There is no reason to feel shame before your spiritual father, He is a person, just like you. Because he knows human weakness and man's inclination to sin, he cannot be your judge. Do not be embarrassed before your spiritual father or afraid to lose his good opinion of you. Your spiritual father will love you all the more, seeing your sincere confession.
2. Confess all of your sins in full, each sin separately. The sinner is spiritually ill and the spiritual father is a physician or healer. It follows that you must relate or confess your sins to your spiritual father the same way that a physically ill person relates his symptoms to a physician.
3. Do not complain about others during confession or talk about their sins. You would be condemning them, thus committing another sin.
4. In confession, do not attempt to justify yourself in any way, blaming weakness, habit, etc. The more you justify yourself, the less you will be justified by God, while the more you condemn your actions, the more you will be justified by God.
5. When questioned by your spiritual father, do not say "*I do not remember, perhaps I am not guilty of that.*" God directed us to always be mindful of our sins. Those who confess infrequently are themselves to blame for forgetfulness. In order not to justify ourselves by forgetfulness, we must confess as often as possible, for we cannot hope to be absolved of sins we forget. It is imperative that we strive to remember all of our sins.
6. Unless asked by your spiritual father, do not talk about sins you have not committed, emulating the Pharisee in the Gospel who only praised himself and did not confess his sins.
7. We must confess with sorrow and contrite heart, the sins by which we have grieved out Lord God. Speaking matter-of-factly or casually about sins committed or laughing during confession, reflect a lack of repentance.
8. Finally, confess your sins with faith in Jesus Christ, with hope in His mercy and confidence in His love for you.

The following scripture passages are especially helpful in preparation: Ephesians 4 and James (especially chapter 3)