

A Complete Guide to Catholic Confession

Examination of conscience ranked by gravity, with the prayers of confession in English and Latin

This guide follows the Ten Commandments, with the precepts of the Church and the duties of one's state after them. Every compound item is broken into its variations, and each is placed in a tier of gravity and ranked roughly within it. A fourth group, not sins in themselves, is listed where false guilt is common. The Sixth and Ninth Commandments are set out in full, married and unmarried, with a section explaining what counts and why.

Censures, the circumstances that must be confessed, and the traditional prayers of the confessional in Latin and English are included. Points on which faithful moralists disagree, and the Church has not ruled, are marked as disputed. It applies the discipline of the Latin Church; Eastern Catholics follow their own law. This is a private aid for an ordinary confession, with no ecclesiastical approval; it is not a substitute for the judgment of a confessor, and no finite list can name every sin.

THE ORDER OF CONFESSION

- 1 Pray for light and contrition.
- 2 Learn how to confess: kind, number, and circumstances.
- 3 Examine your conscience, commandment by commandment.
- 4 Review before entering.
- 5 Confess, mortal sins first.
- 6 Make the Act of Contrition and receive absolution.
- 7 Perform the penance and give thanks.

Grave matter alone does not make a sin mortal. Full knowledge and deliberate consent are also required (CCC 1857). Marking an item in the grave tier is not a verdict on your guilt; it is a reminder to confess it plainly.

Contents

How to use this guide	3
How to read the tiers	3
What makes a sin mortal	4
Step 1: Prayer before examining your conscience	5
Step 2: How to confess	5
Sins committed as a child	6
Step 3: Examination of conscience	7
The examination in brief	7
First Commandment	8
Second Commandment	10
Third Commandment	11
Fourth Commandment	12
Fifth Commandment	14
Sixth and Ninth Commandments	16
Chastity in detail: married and unmarried	22
Seventh and Tenth Commandments	25
Eighth Commandment	27
Precepts of the Church	30
United States and Puerto Rico: holy days and days of penance	30
Sins of Omission and Works of Mercy	31
Nine ways of cooperating in another's sin	31
The seven capital sins	32
State of life and modern conduct	32
Restitution and repair	34
Censures	34
Step 4: Final review before entering	36
Step 5: In the confessional	36
Step 6: Act of Contrition and absolution	37
Step 7: After confession	39
Notes for a peaceful and complete confession	39
My confession: private worksheet	41
Sources	42
Sources for the older manual teaching and disputed points	43

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this guide

A regular confession, briefly	Use the one-page examination in brief at the start of Step 3. Each question gives the numbers of the items where the full note is found.
Regular confession	Pray (Step 1). Then read the grave and grave-or-light items under each commandment, mark what applies, and add the number of times. Read the light items as time allows.
After a long absence, or a general confession	Read every item, and the section on sins committed as a child. You may examine over several sittings.
To understand a point	Read the note under the item. Disputed points are marked, and their sources are listed at the end.

Then copy what you marked onto the worksheet near the end, in the order you will say it: grave matter first, with the number of times and any circumstance that changes the kind of sin. Destroy the paper after confession.

READING THE LIST

How to read the tiers

Within each commandment, items fall into three tiers, and within each tier they run roughly from gravest to least grave. The ranking follows the object of the act: sins directly against God outrank sins against neighbor, and among sins against neighbor, harm to life outranks harm to goods. Who is wronged also matters (CCC 1858; St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae I-II q.73 a.3). The order is a rough guide, not a precise scale.

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

The matter is serious in itself. Committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent, it is a mortal sin and must be confessed by kind and number. If knowledge or consent was lacking, it may be venial; describe it and let the priest judge.

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

The same act can be grave or light depending on amount, duration, harm, or intent. The note under each item gives the dividing line as the Church or the approved authors draw it. Where the line is unclear, confess the act plainly with its circumstances.

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

Venial sins do not destroy charity, but they wound it and dispose toward grave sin. Confessing them is recommended, not required (CCC 1458). A light act becomes grave if done out of contempt for God's law, for a gravely evil purpose, with grave scandal, or while believing it to be grave.

NOT A SIN IN ITSELF

Listed to prevent false guilt. Examine only what you freely chose.

Things commonly confused with sin: involuntary thoughts and feelings, unsought exposure, legitimate actions. They carry no checkbox. What you then freely choose is examined in the tiers above.

FLAGS IN THE NOTES

Censure	If completed and fully imputable, the act carries an automatic canonical penalty. See Censures at the end of the examination.
Restitution owed	Absolution requires the sincere intention to repair the harm.
Cries to heaven	One of the sins the Catechism lists as crying to heaven (CCC 1867). Older catechisms count four: willful murder, sodomy, oppression of the poor, and defrauding workers of their wages.
Against the Holy Spirit	One of the sins that directly reject the means of salvation (St. Thomas, II-II q.14 a.2).
Disputed	Faithful moralists disagree and the Church has not ruled. Follow your confessor's guidance.

Thresholds for theft, Sunday work, and Mass attendance, and several points of sexual morality, come from the pre-conciliar moral manuals; their exact sources are listed at the end of the guide. They record the common teaching of approved authors, not current canon law, and are marked as older manual teaching where they appear. One act listed under several headings is still one act; confess it once, naming each circumstance that changes its kind.

THE ESSENTIALS

What makes a sin mortal

A mortal sin requires three conditions together (CCC 1857):

- 1 Grave matter. The act is seriously wrong in itself.
- 2 Full knowledge. You knew the act was seriously wrong. Ignorance you chose to keep does not excuse; it increases the fault (CCC 1859).
- 3 Deliberate consent. You chose it freely.

If the matter is light, or knowledge or consent is incomplete, the sin is venial (CCC 1862). If knowledge or consent is wholly absent, there is no sin.

The object of the act, the intention, and the circumstances are judged together. A good intention cannot make an act evil in itself good (CCC 1750 to 1756).

Culpability can be diminished or removed by ignorance that is not your fault, inadvertence, force, fear, habit, strong passion, or psychological disorder (CCC 1735, 1860).

In sexual matters every direct violation of the moral order is objectively serious (Persona Humana 10); the manuals express this by saying there is no lightness of matter. Culpability can still be reduced by immaturity, habit, anxiety, or other factors (CCC 2352).

Temptations, involuntary thoughts, feelings, dreams, and intrusive images are not sins merely because they occur. Sin lies in what is knowingly and freely chosen.

STEP 1

Prayer before examining your conscience

Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind that I may clearly know my sins, and move my heart to true sorrow for them. Grant me the grace to confess them fully, humbly, and sincerely, and to firmly resolve to amend my life. Mary, my Mother, pray for me. Amen.

Time since my last good confession

My state in life and principal duties

Did I perform the penance from my last confession?

Restitution or repair still to be made

STEP 2

How to confess

KIND AND NUMBER

Confess every mortal sin committed after baptism that you remember after a careful examination and have not yet confessed and been absolved from, by its kind and number. If you do not know the number, give frequency and duration: “about twice a week for three months.” Avoid names and graphic detail.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MUST BE NAMED

Mention any circumstance that changes the kind of sin (Council of Trent, Session XIV, canon 7): that you or the other person was married, under vow, or ordained; that the other person was a relative or a minor; that the act took place in a sacred place or involved a sacred object. Also mention grave harm or scandal caused, and any restitution still owed.

FORGOTTEN, DOUBTFUL, AND CONCEALED SINS

A mortal sin honestly forgotten is forgiven with the others. Confess it at your next confession.

You are not bound to confess as certain a sin you doubt you committed, or doubt was mortal. You may mention it as doubtful. If you are scrupulous, follow your confessor’s rule. Do not manufacture memories to fill a checklist.

Deliberately concealing a mortal sin makes the confession invalid and adds a sacrilege. The remedy: confess the concealment, say how many confessions and Communions followed it, and confess again all mortal sins since your last good confession. The priest will help you sort it out.

CONTRITION

Contrition is sorrow for sin with a firm purpose of amendment. Imperfect contrition, sorrow arising from fear of hell or the ugliness of sin, suffices with absolution (CCC 1453). Perfect contrition, sorrow arising from love of God, forgives mortal sin even before confession if it includes the resolve to confess as soon as possible (CCC 1452).

You need not be certain you will never fall again. You need a present, sincere resolve to avoid sin and its near occasions.

A CONFESSION OF VENIAL SINS ONLY

Venial sins confessed with sorrow are sufficient matter for absolution (Council of Trent, Session XIV, chapter 5; can. 988 §2; CCC 1458). Many confessors advise adding a sin of your past life, already forgiven, so that there is certainly sorrow for at least one sin confessed. When you have only doubtful sins or imperfections, adding it is necessary to give certain matter (common teaching).

CHOICE OF CONFESSOR AND GENERAL ABSOLUTION

You may confess to any lawfully approved confessor you choose, even one of another rite (can. 991).

General absolution without individual confession is lawful only in danger of death or in grave necessity as the law defines it (cann. 961 to 963). Anyone so absolved from grave sins must intend to confess them individually, and must do so at the next opportunity, before receiving another general absolution, unless a just cause intervenes.

AGE AND CONFESSION

Sins committed as a child

MUST THEY BE CONFESSED?

Yes, if the act was a mortal sin committed after baptism and has never been confessed and absolved. The duty begins with the use of reason, which the law presumes at the completed seventh year (can. 97 §2), not at sixteen or eighteen. The age of discretion in can. 989 is this same age of reason.

JUDGE BY WHAT YOU KNEW THEN

Judge by what you understood and freely chose at the time, not by what you know now. A serious act in childhood was not automatically a mortal sin; immaturity, fear, ignorance, and pressure can reduce or remove guilt. Abuse suffered is never the victim's sin.

THE AGES 16 AND 18

These concern canonical penalties only. Under 16 no penalty is incurred; at 16 and 17 no automatic penalty is incurred, and an imposed penalty is mitigated (cann. 1323, 1324). They do not change what must be confessed.

WHAT TO SAY

“When I was about twelve, I did this. I have not confessed it before. I am not sure how fully I understood.” An honest estimate of the number is enough.

ALREADY CONFESSED OR FORGOTTEN

A childhood sin already confessed is forgiven; do not repeat it because it still troubles you. One honestly forgotten in a good confession was forgiven too; mention it once when remembered. State a doubtful memory as doubtful.

STEP 3

Examination of conscience

THE EXAMINATION IN BRIEF: FOR A REGULAR CONFESSION

Mark what applies. The numbers point to the full examination that follows, where each item carries its note and the dividing line between grave and light. Then copy your list onto the worksheet, grave matter first with the number of times, and go to Step 4.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Doubted or denied the faith deliberately, or gave up prayer for a long time? 004, 007, 032
- ☐ Consulted psychics or horoscopes in earnest, used a Ouija board, or practiced any occult thing? 020 to 022, 035
- ☐ Received Communion in mortal sin, or hidden a sin in confession? 017, 018
- ☐ Despaired of God's mercy, or presumed on it, planning to sin and confess later? 009 to 011
- ☐ Put money, work, pleasure, or a person before God? 030

SECOND COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Used God's name or Jesus' name carelessly or in anger? 052
- ☐ Blasphemed, mocked holy things, or sworn falsely? 040 to 042, 050
- ☐ Broken a vow, or a promise made under oath? 046, 047
- ☐ Cursed anyone? 049

THIRD COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Missed Mass on a Sunday or holy day through my own fault, or arrived late or left early? 054, 055, 057
- ☐ Done unnecessary work on Sunday, or kept others from Mass? 056, 059
- ☐ Received Communion without the one-hour fast, or without reverence? 060, 061, 064

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Dishonored, neglected, or been unkind to my parents? 067, 068, 081, 096
- ☐ Neglected my children's needs, their formation in the faith, or their correction? 072, 074, 083
- ☐ Failed my spouse in fidelity of heart, support, or respect? 086, 087, 099
- ☐ Abused authority at work or at home, obeyed a sinful command, or disobeyed just laws and lawful authority? 078, 088, 091, 092

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Taken part in an abortion or in euthanasia, or encouraged either? 101 to 104
- ☐ Hated anyone, wished them harm, refused to forgive, or nursed anger? 107, 123, 124
- ☐ Used illegal drugs, got drunk, or driven impaired? 111, 116, 117, 130
- ☐ Led anyone into sin by word, example, or pressure? 112 to 114
- ☐ Harmed my health recklessly, or been cruel or unkind? 125, 127, 132

SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

- ☐ Had sexual relations, or any sexual act, with anyone outside marriage? 138, 145 to 148

- ☐ Masturbated, or deliberately aroused myself? 171, 172
- ☐ Looked at pornography, or used sexual chat or erotica? 168, 170
- ☐ Entertained lustful thoughts or desires willingly? 175 to 178
- ☐ Married: used contraception, sterilization, or withdrawal, or completed the act outside intercourse? 153 to 159
- ☐ Dressed or behaved to provoke lust, or stayed in a near occasion of sin? 174, 179

SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

- ☐ Stolen, kept what was not mine, or failed to return or repay? 200, 207 to 209, 226
- ☐ Cheated at work, on taxes, in business, or in games? 201, 205, 212, 215, 216
- ☐ Withheld fair wages, or exploited anyone? 197, 198, 214
- ☐ Envied others, or let greed rule me? 220, 221
- ☐ Neglected the poor, or wasted what I have? 222, 230

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

- ☐ Lied, in a serious matter or a small one? 237, 253
- ☐ Spoken of others' faults without need, gossiped, or judged rashly? 234, 243 to 245, 255
- ☐ Damaged a reputation by falsehood, and left it unrepaired? 232, 241
- ☐ Broken a confidence, or cheated in school or at work? 238, 246 to 248

PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH AND DUTIES OF STATE

- ☐ Gone more than a year without confession while conscious of mortal sin, or missed Easter Communion? 258, 259
- ☐ Broken the days of fast and abstinence? 260
- ☐ Failed to support the Church, or to do the penance I was given? 261, 262
- ☐ Neglected the duties of my state in life, my work, or the works of mercy? 264 to 266, 285
- ☐ Online: bullied anyone, shared private material, or let screens crowd out prayer and family? 291, 292, 297

If nothing here applies, confess the venial sins you notice most, and add a sin of your past life for which you are certainly sorry.

THE FULL EXAMINATION

Examine calmly, commandment by commandment, and mark what applies. In confession, mortal sins come first, by kind and number.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

Faith, hope, and charity toward God, and the worship owed to Him.

GRAVE MATTER		Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.	
☐	Hated God, or deliberately cultivated contempt for Him. The gravest of all sins (ST II-II q.34 a.2).	001	
☐	Abandoned or repudiated the Christian faith entirely (apostasy). Censure: automatic excommunication (can. 1364 §1).	002	
☐	Worshiped a false god, an idol, or Satan, or took part in Satanic ritual. Idolatry (CCC 2113).	003	
☐	Obstinately denied or doubted a truth I knew the Church teaches as divinely revealed (heresy). Censure: automatic excommunication (can. 1364 §1). Heresy requires obstinacy about a truth of divine and Catholic faith (can. 751). Involuntary doubts and honest questions are not sins (CCC 2088, 2089).	004	
☐	Refused submission to the Pope, or communion with the members of the Church subject to him (schism). Censure: automatic excommunication (can. 1364 §1). CCC 2089; can. 751. Disagreement with a prudential decision is not schism.	005	
☐	Obstinately rejected a doctrine the Church proposes definitively, though not as divinely revealed. Can. 750 §2; penalty after warning, can. 1365.	006	
☐	Denied that God exists, or deliberately rejected Him. CCC 2125.	007	
☐	Outwardly denied the faith, or denied being Catholic, out of fear or for advantage. Mt 10:33. Grave matter even if I believed inwardly, and even under threat. Prudent silence without denial is not denial.	008	
☐	Deliberately despaired of God's mercy or of my salvation. Against the Holy Spirit. CCC 2091. Feelings of hopelessness, depression, or fear are not this sin; the sin is the willed rejection of hope.	009	
☐	Sinned on the strength of God's mercy, planning to sin and confess later. Against the Holy Spirit. CCC 2092.	010	
☐	Presumed I would be saved without repentance or conversion. Against the Holy Spirit. CCC 2092.	011	
☐	Fought against a truth of faith I knew to be true. Against the Holy Spirit. ST II-II q.14 a.2.	012	
☐	Resented another person's growth in grace or holiness. Against the Holy Spirit. ST II-II q.14 a.2.	013	
☐	Resolved to remain in grave sin, and refused to repent. Against the Holy Spirit. Obstinacy (CCC 1864). Final impenitence means remaining unrepentant until death; while you live, you can repent.	014	
☐	Threw away the consecrated Host or Precious Blood, or took or kept them for a sacrilegious purpose. Censure: automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See (can. 1382 §1).	015	
☐	Otherwise treated the Blessed Sacrament with grave irreverence. Sacrilege (CCC 2120).	016	

☐ Received Holy Communion knowing I was in mortal sin.	017
Sacrilege. The only exception (can. 916): a grave reason to receive, no opportunity to confess, and an act of perfect contrition that includes the resolve to confess as soon as possible.	
☐ Deliberately concealed a mortal sin in confession, or confessed with no sorrow or purpose of amendment.	018
The confession was invalid and sacrilegious. See the remedy in Step 2. CCC 1451, 1456, 2120; cann. 987, 988 §1.	
☐ Received Confirmation, Matrimony, or Holy Orders knowingly in mortal sin, or received any sacrament by fraud or with grave contempt.	019
Sacrilege (CCC 2120).	
☐ Practiced magic, sorcery, witchcraft, spells, hexes, curses, or occult rituals.	020
CCC 2117.	
☐ Took part in a seance, used a Ouija or spirit board, or tried to contact the dead or summon spirits.	021
CCC 2116, 2117. Curiosity does not make it safe. Prayer for the dead and the intercession of the saints are another matter entirely.	
☐ Consulted a psychic, medium, fortune-teller, tarot reader, astrologer, numerologist, or palm reader in earnest.	022
Divination (CCC 2116). A horoscope read in jest, without belief and without seeking guidance from it, is listed under Not a sin in itself at the end of this commandment.	
☐ Joined or remained a member of the Freemasons.	023
Members are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion (CDF declaration, 1983; reaffirmed by the DDF, 13 November 2023). Joining any association that plots against the Church is also a canonical offense (can. 1374).	
☐ Bought or sold spiritual things: a sacrament, a blessing, a relic, or a Church office (simony).	024
CCC 2121. For a sacrament, can. 1380; an office conferred through simony is invalid (can. 149 §3); selling sacred relics is forbidden (can. 1190 §1). Offerings set by Church authority, such as Mass stipends, are not simony (CCC 2122).	
☐ Attempted to celebrate Mass without being a priest, or, unable to absolve validly, attempted to absolve or heard a sacramental confession.	025
Censure: automatic interdict; for a cleric also suspension (can. 1379 §1).	

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ Deliberately nourished doubts against the faith, or exposed my faith to serious danger through reading, company, or media without a proportionate reason.	026
Grave when the doubt is willed or the danger serious (CCC 2088); not consented to, or slight, it is light or no sin (CCC 1735, 1737). Study for a serious reason, with safeguards, is not sinful exposure.	
☐ Hid my faith out of human respect.	027
Grave when silence amounted to denial in a serious matter; light in trivial situations. Cf. CCC 2145, 2471.	
☐ Took part in non-Catholic worship in a way the Church forbids: received communion at a non-Catholic service, professed a faith I do not hold, or treated the religions as interchangeable.	028
Grave when it expresses a faith I do not share, as receiving communion at a Protestant service does (can. 1381). Joining in the hymns, psalms, responses, and common prayer of another Christian community, and respectful attendance at a wedding or funeral, are permitted (Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, 1993, nn. 108, 118). Can. 844 §2 allows receiving penance, the Eucharist, and anointing from non-Catholic ministers only in Churches where those sacraments are valid, when necessity requires or genuine spiritual advantage suggests, when a Catholic minister is physically or morally impossible to reach, and when error and indifferentism are avoided. Taking part in the worship of a non-Christian religion is a different question; describe it to the priest.	
☐ Held or promoted that all religions are equally true, or that religious truth does not matter.	029
Grave when held deliberately and spread; light as careless talk. Cf. CCC 2089, 2104.	
☐ Made money, career, politics, pleasure, status, a relationship, or another created good my practical highest good.	030
Grave when it led me to commit, or to be ready to commit, a mortal sin rather than give it up. Cf. CCC 2113, 1855.	
☐ Neglected to learn what my state requires: the Creed, the Commandments, the sacraments, and the duties of my state.	031
Grave when the ignorance is serious and chosen; light for lesser gaps. Cf. CCC 1783, 1784, 1791; can. 229 §1.	

☐ Abandoned prayer for a long time through laziness or indifference.	032
Grave when prayer is given up altogether for a long period; light for occasional lapses. There is no fixed number of days. Cf. CCC 2098, 2744; McHugh and Callan, n. 2157.	
☐ Was indifferent, ungrateful, or lukewarm toward God.	033
Grave when it becomes a settled refusal of God's love; light when passing (CCC 2094).	
☐ Tempted God by demanding a sign, or took a reckless risk expecting a miraculous rescue.	034
Grave when the risk or the irreverence is serious (CCC 2119).	
☐ Used charms, crystals, objects, rituals, or sacramentals as if they worked by magic.	035
Superstition (CCC 2111). Grave when evil spirits are invoked or false rites used, or when a curse or grave harm is willed; otherwise usually venial (McHugh and Callan, n. 2295).	
☐ Profaned a church, sacred object, relic, or consecrated person.	036
Grave in serious matter (CCC 2120; can. 1369 for a sacred object or place; can. 1370 §3 for physical force against a cleric or religious out of contempt for the faith); light when slight.	
☐ Culpably neglected a serious duty I accepted as a godparent or sponsor.	037
Cann. 872, 892. Gravity follows the duty and what I could reasonably do.	

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Neglected my daily prayers, or let myself be deliberately distracted in prayer.	038
Cf. CCC 2098, 2729; McHugh and Callan, n. 2171.	
☐ Kept small superstitious habits, half believing in them.	039
Cf. CCC 2111, 1862.	

NOT A SIN IN ITSELF

Listed to prevent false guilt. Examine only what you freely chose.

Read a horoscope in jest, without belief and without seeking guidance from it.

Not divination (CCC 2116). The manuals call a joking consultation at most venial (McHugh and Callan, n. 2286); avoid it if it tempts you to belief or gives scandal.

Used a customary expression or gesture for luck without believing in it.

No sin, or at most a light fault, without belief (CCC 2111; McHugh and Callan, n. 2295).

Suffered involuntary distraction or dryness in prayer.

Not a sin (CCC 2729, 2731; cf. CCC 1735).

SECOND COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Reverence for God's name, and truthfulness in oaths and vows.

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

☐ Blasphemed God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Our Lady, the saints, the Church, the sacraments, or sacred things with words of hatred, reproach, or defiance.	040
Grave in itself (CCC 2148). Public blasphemy is also a canonical offense (can. 1368).	
☐ Used holy names deliberately with contempt or grave irreverence.	041
CCC 2146.	
☐ Swore falsely, calling God to witness a lie (perjury).	042
CCC 2150, 2152. Perjury before a Church authority is also a canonical offense (can. 1371 §3).	
☐ Encouraged or induced others to blaspheme or to misuse holy things.	043
Scandal (CCC 2284).	
☐ Swore an oath to commit a grave sin.	044
Such an oath does not bind; keeping it is a further sin. CCC 2152; can. 1201 §2.	

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| ☐ Invoked God or religion to justify abuse, violence, or crime.
CCC 2148. | 045 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Swore to something I was unsure of, as though it were certain.
An oath lacks truth when one swears as certain what one only believes; a perjured oath is mortal from its nature, and escapes that guilt only through imperfect reflection or consent (McHugh and Callan, nn. 2249, 2250; CCC 2150, 2152). | 048 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

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|---|-----|---|
| ☐ Culpably broke a vow made to God.
Grave when the vow bound gravely and the matter was serious (can. 1191). A priest can advise on dispensation or commutation (can. 1196, 1197). | 046 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Failed to keep a lawful promise I had confirmed by oath.
Breaking a sworn promise is perjury (CCC 2152; can. 1200 §1). Grave when the matter promised is serious. | 047 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Cursed another person or myself, calling down evil.
Grave when serious evil is seriously wished; light when said in anger without real intent. An angry feeling not acted on is not a curse. Cf. CCC 2303. | 049 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Mocked Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, or holy things.
Grave with contempt or grave scandal; light as thoughtless joking. Cf. CCC 2148, 2120, 2284. | 050 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Used obscene, degrading, or seriously scandalous speech.
Grave when it gives grave scandal or is meant to arouse; otherwise light. Sexual talk is under the Sixth Commandment. Cf. CCC 2284, 2351; Eph 5:3-4. | 051 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

- | | | |
|--|-----|--|
| ☐ Used the name of God or of Jesus carelessly or out of habit, without contempt.
Habit lessens guilt but calls for effort to correct it. Cf. CCC 2146, 2149. | 052 | |
| ☐ Swore needless oaths in ordinary speech about things that were true.
CCC 2154, 2155; McHugh and Callan, n. 2250. | 053 | |

THIRD COMMANDMENT

Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

Sunday and holy day Mass, Sunday rest, and reverence for the Eucharist.

Any Mass in a Catholic rite satisfies the obligation, on the day itself or the evening before (can. 1248 §1). Holy days of obligation are those in force where you are, as set by the bishops' conference under current law (can. 1246), not by the 1962 calendar; for the United States and Puerto Rico, see the note under the Precepts of the Church. A broadcast Mass does not satisfy the obligation.

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

- | | | |
|--|-----|---|
| ☐ Missed Mass on a Sunday through my own fault, without a serious reason.
CCC 2181. Excused by illness, care of infants or the sick, serious hardship, or a dispensation from my pastor. | 054 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Missed Mass on a holy day of obligation in force where I was, through my own fault.
The same excuses apply as for Sunday. CCC 2181; cann. 1246, 1247, 1248. | 055 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Caused or pressured another, especially a child in my care, to miss obligatory Mass without sufficient reason.
Takes the gravity of the sin caused. Cf. CCC 2181, 2284. | 056 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

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|---|-----|---|
| ☐ Arrived late or left early through my own fault.
Older manuals: missing a notable part of the Mass fails the obligation. A part is notable by dignity (the Consecration or the priest's Communion) or by length (about a third of the Mass; the beginning through the Gospel together with the Communion to the end makes a third). Arriving just at the Offertory, or leaving right after the priest's Communion, is venial on its own; doing both is grave, and so is missing the Consecration or the priest's Communion (McHugh and Callan, Moral Theology, n. 2583; Slater, A Manual of Moral Theology, vol. 1). Current law states no minimum; it obliges participation in the Mass (can. 1247). | 057 | <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
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| ☐ Slept, or occupied myself with something else such as reading or my phone, through a notable part of Mass.
Older manuals: this fails the obligation like absence (McHugh and Callan, n. 2583). Wandering thoughts are at most light. | 058
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Did or required unnecessary servile work on Sunday.
Older manuals: servile work without excuse was grave when notable in duration or in kind. Slater (A Manual of Moral Theology, vol. 1) gives the common opinion as well over two hours; McHugh and Callan (Moral Theology, n. 2583) give about two and a half hours of very heavy work such as digging, three hours of lighter work such as sowing, and even brief work that is serious by its kind, such as court proceedings. Current law asks rest from work that hinders worship, the joy of the Lord's Day, and suitable rest (can. 1247; CCC 2185). Necessity, charity, and legitimate custom excuse. | 059
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Received Communion without keeping the Eucharistic fast.
One hour before Communion from food and drink, except water and medicine (can. 919 §1); the elderly, the sick, and those caring for them are exempt (can. 919 §3); a priest celebrating two or three Masses that day may eat before the second or third even within the hour (can. 919 §2). The three-hour fast of 1957 is no longer law, though many keep it by devotion. The manuals held the former fast from midnight to bind gravely (McHugh and Callan, n. 2711); moralists differ on whether a deliberate breach of the one-hour rule is grave. Confess a deliberate breach. An inadvertent breach is no sin; if you notice it before Communion, refrain. | 060
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Behaved with deliberate irreverence at Mass, or seriously distracted others.
Grave with contempt or serious disruption; otherwise light. Cf. CCC 1387, 2120. | 061
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

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| ☐ Arrived late or left early, but missed less than a notable part.
Arriving just at the Offertory, or leaving right after the priest's Communion, but not both (McHugh and Callan, n. 2583). | 062 |
| ☐ Talked, used my phone, or let my attention wander at Mass.
Cf. CCC 1387, 2729, 1735. | 063 |
| ☐ Received Communion out of routine, without preparation or thanksgiving.
Cf. CCC 1385, 1386, 1387. | 064 |
| ☐ Ran errands or did light work on Sunday short of the grave threshold.
CCC 2185, 2186, 2187; can. 1247. | 065 |
| ☐ Dressed carelessly or disrespectfully for Mass when I could reasonably have done better.
Dress meant to provoke is under the Sixth Commandment. Cf. CCC 1387. | 066 |

NOT A SIN IN ITSELF

Listed to prevent false guilt. Examine only what you freely chose.

Wore ordinary or work clothes to Mass because of work, poverty, or circumstance.
 Not a sin (cf. CCC 1387, 1735).

Did necessary work, or errands that did not hinder worship or rest, on Sunday.
 Not a sin (CCC 2185 to 2187).

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Duties of children, parents, and spouses, and of those under or in authority.

Honor does not require obeying a sinful command (CCC 2217), nor submitting to abuse or giving up boundaries needed for safety. Adult children have the right and duty to choose their profession and state of life; parents may advise but must not pressure them (CCC 2230, 2232).

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

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|--|--|
| ☐ Struck or cursed my parents, held them in grave contempt, or wished them grave harm.
Ex 21:15, 17; CCC 2214 to 2218. Defending oneself from abuse is not dishonor. | 067
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Abandoned my parents in grave need when I had the duty and ability to help.
CCC 2218. | 068
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| ☐ Manipulated, exploited, stole from, or deceived an elderly or dependent relative.
Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2218, 2409, 2484. | 069
<input style="width: 60px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |

☐ Was physically, verbally, emotionally, or sexually abusive toward a child. Also a crime. The child's protection comes first. Cf. CCC 2222, 2223, 2389, 2297.	070	
☐ Knowingly exposed a child to serious physical, sexual, online, or moral danger. Cf. CCC 2223, 2285, 2269.	071	
☐ Grossly neglected a child's basic needs: food, shelter, medical care, education, or emotional care. Cf. CCC 2228, 2288.	072	
☐ Refused without good reason to have my children baptized or raised Catholic, or handed a child over to another religion. Can. 1136. In a mixed marriage the Catholic party promises to do all in his or her power (can. 1125). Handing a child over to a non-Catholic religion is also a canonical offense (can. 1367), though not an automatic penalty.	073	
☐ Neglected my children's formation in the faith for a long time: prayer, Mass, the sacraments, and moral teaching. CCC 2223 to 2226.	074	
☐ Led my children into grave sin by word or example. Scandal (CCC 2285).	075	
☐ Used violence, threats, intimidation, or coercion against my spouse or family. Cf. CCC 2356, 2297, 2386; can. 1153.	076	
☐ Abandoned my spouse or family without just cause. Separation for safety or another grave cause is not abandonment (can. 1153).	077	
☐ Used civil, professional, clerical, educational, parental, or workplace authority for serious injustice, corruption, retaliation, or private gain. Cf. CCC 2235, 2409, 2287.	078	
☐ Used physical force against the Pope or a bishop. Censure: automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See for the Pope; automatic interdict for a bishop (can. 1370 §1, 2).	079	

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ As a minor, disobeyed my parents or guardians. Grave in serious matters that concern my welfare or the household; light in small things (CCC 2217).	080	
☐ Neglected elderly, sick, or needy parents when I had a duty and ability to help. Grave when the need is serious; light for occasional thoughtlessness. Cf. CCC 2218.	081	
☐ Delayed my child's baptism. Required within the first few weeks (can. 867 §1). The longer and less justified the delay, the more serious.	082	
☐ Failed to correct my children's wrongdoing through laziness or indifference. Grave when the wrong is serious and correction is habitually neglected. Cf. CCC 2223.	083	
☐ Punished my children in a humiliating, excessive, vindictive, or cruel way. Grave when the injustice or harm is serious; light in passing impatience. Cf. CCC 2223.	084	
☐ Interfered unjustly with an adult child's vocation or marriage. Advice is right; coercion is wrong (CCC 2230, 2232, 2233). Grave when it is serious unjust interference.	085	
☐ Neglected serious duties toward my spouse: fidelity of heart, support, care, communication, or protection. Grave when the neglect is serious or prolonged. Sexual infidelity is under the Sixth. Cf. CCC 2364; can. 1135.	086	
☐ Belittled, humiliated, or manipulated my spouse. Grave when serious and wounding; light in passing. Cf. CCC 2227, 1829.	087	
☐ Obeyed an authority who commanded something sinful. Gravity follows the act done. The command does not excuse it. CCC 2242, 2217, 1735.	088	

☐ As an employer, failed to provide safe conditions or fair treatment. Grave when it risks serious harm. Wages are under the Seventh. Cf. CCC 2432, 2288.	089	
☐ Showed favoritism, or treated those under my authority unjustly. Grave when it causes serious injustice. Cf. CCC 1935, 2236.	090	
☐ Disobeyed just laws without sufficient reason. Gravity depends on the law and the harm. Tax fraud is under the Seventh.	091	
☐ Showed contempt for legitimate authority. Grave in serious matters or with grave scandal; light as grumbling. Cf. CCC 2238; can. 212 §3.	092	
☐ Neglected civic duties such as voting without good reason. CCC 2240. Gravity follows the harm to the common good; the Catechism states the duty without fixing a degree.	093	
☐ Failed to arrange the sacraments or other spiritual help for a seriously ill person in my care. Consider the person's wishes and my real duty (cann. 922, 1001).	094	
☐ Unjustly obstructed contact, support, or care owed to a child or dependent. CCC 2218, 2228.	095	

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Was rude, impatient, or unkind to my parents. Cf. CCC 2215.	096	
☐ Neglected contact with my parents or family through carelessness. Reasonable boundaries, distance, or safety can justify limited contact. Cf. CCC 2218.	097	
☐ Showed impatience or small favoritism with my children. Cf. CCC 2223.	098	
☐ Was irritable or sharp with my spouse. Cf. CCC 2227, 1829.	099	

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not kill.

Human life, bodily integrity, health, anger, and scandal.

Legitimate defense, pain relief without the intention to kill, and declining disproportionate treatment are not killing (CCC 2263 to 2265, 2278, 2279). Illness, including mental illness, and suicidal thoughts are not sins in themselves.

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

☐ Intentionally killed an innocent person, attempted it, or arranged it. Cries to heaven (CCC 1867). CCC 2268.	100	
☐ Procured or performed an abortion, or was an accomplice without whom it would not have happened. Censure: automatic excommunication when the abortion is completed (can. 1397 §2; accomplices, can. 1329 §2). Any priest with faculties to hear confessions may absolve it (Misericordia et misera 12); in danger of death, any priest (can. 976).	101	
☐ Paid for, pressured, advised, or otherwise formally cooperated in an abortion. Grave even where the censure does not apply (CCC 2271, 2272).	102	
☐ Used a drug or device with the intention of causing an abortion. CCC 2271.	103	
☐ Took part directly in euthanasia or assisted suicide. CCC 2277, 2282. Declining disproportionate treatment and giving adequate pain relief are not euthanasia (CCC 2278, 2279).	104	
☐ Took part in the deliberate destruction of human embryos, or in destructive experimentation on them. CCC 2274, 2275; Dignitas Personae.	105	

☐ Committed assault, torture, kidnapping, or other grave physical harm. CCC 2297; can. 1397 §1.	106
☐ Hated another person, seriously wished them grave harm or death, or plotted revenge. CCC 2302, 2303.	107
☐ Failed to protect a child, patient, dependent, or other vulnerable person from serious abuse, or failed to report it, when my role gave me the duty and I could reasonably act. Cf. CCC 2265, 1868; can. 1371 §6.	108
☐ Attempted suicide. CCC 2280, 2281. Grave psychological disturbance, anguish, or fear can diminish responsibility (CCC 2282). The same holds for self-harm: seek help first. If such thoughts are present now, tell the priest and someone you trust. Call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, at any hour. In Puerto Rico, Línea PAS, 1-800-981-0023, also answers 988.	109
☐ Encouraged a vulnerable person toward suicide. Cf. CCC 2282, 2284.	110
☐ Drove while intoxicated, or otherwise recklessly endangered life. CCC 2290.	111
☐ Corrupted the young or the vulnerable. Scandal toward the young is especially grave (CCC 2285; Mt 18:6).	112
☐ Led another into grave sin by word, example, approval, or assistance. Scandal (CCC 2284).	113
☐ Cooperated formally in another's grave sin, or materially without a proportionate reason. See the nine ways of cooperating in sin. CCC 1868.	114
☐ Supplied illicit drugs to others, or led others into serious substance abuse. CCC 2291.	115
☐ Used illicit drugs, or abused medication to get intoxicated. A grave offense except on strictly therapeutic grounds (CCC 2291).	116
☐ Drank to complete drunkenness, losing the use of reason. ST II-II q.150 a.2.	117
☐ Took part in human trafficking, slavery, or forced labor. CCC 2414.	118
☐ Performed or authorized an amputation, mutilation, or sterilization of another without a strict therapeutic reason. CCC 2297.	119
☐ Performed or authorized experimentation on a person without valid consent or with disproportionate risk. CCC 2295.	120
☐ Through serious negligence caused, or knowingly exposed someone to, a grave danger to life or health. CCC 2269, 2290. Examples: entrusted care, unsafe equipment, knowingly dangerous conduct.	121

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ Failed to help someone in grave physical need when I could reasonably have done so. Grave when the need was grave and the help easy and mine to give. Cf. CCC 2269, 2447.	122
☐ Indulged rage, violent anger, bullying, intimidation, or threats. Grave when it reaches hatred, serious harm, or serious fear; light in passing (CCC 2302).	123
☐ Refused forgiveness or reconciliation in a way that nourished hatred. Grave when it feeds hatred or a desire for revenge. Being unable to forget, or to trust again, is not refusing to forgive.	124

☐ Gravely neglected my health or safety, or took serious risks without a proportionate reason. Grave when the danger is serious and the reason trivial. Cf. CCC 2288, 2290.	125
☐ Seriously abused food, drink, or another bodily good. Grave when it causes serious harm to health or duties; light as ordinary excess. Cf. CCC 2290.	126
☐ Was cruel to animals, or caused them needless suffering. CCC 2418. Grave in serious cruelty.	127
☐ Humiliated or unjustly discriminated against another because of race, religion, sex, disability, or another condition. CCC 1935. Grave when the injustice or harm is serious.	128
☐ Refused ordinary care owed to a seriously ill or dying person. CCC 2279. Declining disproportionate treatment is different.	129

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Drank to partial intoxication, keeping the use of reason. Venial in itself; grave when it endangers others, as in driving, or leads to grave sin.	130
☐ Ate or drank to excess in ordinary ways. An eating disorder or a medical need is not itself a sin. Cf. CCC 2290.	131
☐ Was impatient, short-tempered, or unkind. Cf. CCC 1829, 2302.	132
☐ Wished small misfortunes on others. CCC 2303.	133

SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Chastity in act, desire, look, word, and media; the marital act and the goods of marriage. CCC 2331 to 2400, 2514 to 2533.

Outside marriage, every sexual pleasure deliberately sought or consented to is grave matter, whether or not it goes to climax, alone or with another, in act, look, word, or thought. In these matters every direct violation of the moral order is objectively serious (Persona Humana 10); the manuals put it as there being no lightness of matter. Within marriage, sexual pleasure is good when it belongs to the marital act, but the husband's climax must take place only within intercourse, and every act must remain open to life. Temptation, involuntary arousal, and unwanted thoughts are not sins. Immaturity, habit, and anxiety can lower guilt; they do not make grave matter light (CCC 2352). The section that follows this checklist, Chastity in detail, sets out what counts, married and unmarried. Points that rest on the manuals or on recent moralists rather than on a magisterial text are identified as such, and their sources are listed at the end of the guide. Items marked Disputed are listed for guidance, not as a finding of sin.

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

☐ Committed rape or sexual assault, or coerced anyone into sexual acts, including my spouse. CCC 2356; Humanae Vitae 13. Also a crime. The victim is not guilty of what was imposed on them.	134
☐ Sexually abused a minor or a vulnerable adult. CCC 2389. Also a crime. The victim's protection comes first.	135
☐ Deliberately viewed, sought, kept, produced, or shared sexual images of minors. Also a grave crime (CCC 2354, 2389). Involuntary exposure is not this sin.	136
☐ Committed incest: sexual acts with a relative or in-law within the degrees that forbid marriage. CCC 2388. Name the relationship.	137
☐ Committed adultery: sexual acts with someone other than my spouse while I was married, or with a person married to someone else. CCC 2380, 2381. Say which party was married, or that both were. A civil divorce does not end a valid marriage.	138
☐ Committed sexual acts with an animal. ST II-II q.154 a.11; McHugh and Callan, n. 2534.	139

☐ Engaged in homosexual acts.	140
<i>Cries to heaven (CCC 1867).</i> CCC 2357. The inclination is not itself a sin (CCC 2358).	
☐ Paid for sex, sold sex, or took part in prostitution, trafficking, or other commercial sexual exploitation.	141
CCC 2355. A person coerced or trafficked bears greatly reduced responsibility, or none.	
☐ Took part in group sex, partner swapping, or an open marriage, or brought a third person into marital relations.	142
Adultery when either party is married (CCC 2380, 2381); fornication otherwise. Grave in every case.	
☐ Committed a sexual act in a church or other sacred place.	143
This adds sacrilege. The manuals included even marital intercourse there without necessity (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1912, Sacrilege). Name the place. CCC 2120.	
☐ Engaged in sexual acts where others, especially children, could see.	144
Grave scandal (CCC 2284, 2285); in many places also a crime.	
☐ Committed fornication: sexual intercourse outside a valid marriage, including with my fiancé or fiancée.	145
CCC 2353. Engagement gives no marital rights.	
☐ Had oral or anal sex, or brought another to climax or was brought to climax by hand, outside marriage.	146
Grave with or without climax (Persona Humana 10). Say briefly what kind of act; graphic detail is not needed.	
☐ Deliberately sought sexual arousal with another outside marriage without intercourse or climax: sexual touching over or under clothing, genital contact, or erotic play.	147
Incomplete acts deliberately sought outside marriage are grave. The Baltimore Catechism (No. 3, 1949) defines impurity as any deliberate thought, word, look, or deed, alone or with another, by which the sexual appetite is aroused outside marriage.	
☐ Engaged in passionate or prolonged kissing outside marriage for sexual pleasure.	148
The Holy See condemned the proposition that it is probable that a kiss sought for the carnal pleasure it gives is only venial, even when the danger of further consent is excluded (Alexander VII, prop. 40, 18 March 1666; DS 2060). Affectionate kisses without that intent are not sinful (ST II-II q.154 a.4). Kissing or embracing that was likely to arouse, though arousal was not sought, is item 189.	
☐ Entered or continued a sexual union while bound by a prior valid marriage.	149
Adultery (CCC 2384). A prior marriage is presumed valid until a tribunal declares otherwise (can. 1060); do not decide it yourself. Familiaris Consortio 84 (CCC 1650) asks those who cannot separate to live as brother and sister before absolution and Communion. Amoris Laetitia (n. 305 and note 351), with the 2016 letter to the Buenos Aires bishops published as authentic magisterium, and the DDF reply to Cardinal Duka (25 September 2023) hold that after pastoral discernment, in particular cases where responsibility is diminished, absolution and Communion may be given even without full continence; the DDF reply keeps the proposal of continence, says this is no general permission, and places the discernment under the bishop; the process does not necessarily end in admission to the sacraments. Pope Leo XIV's message for the exhortation's tenth anniversary (19 March 2026) recalls chapter VIII with approval and does not address the point. Theologians still debate how these texts fit the earlier discipline. Explain your situation to the priest and ask for that accompaniment. See Marital situations.	
☐ Lived with a partner in a sexual relationship outside marriage.	150
CCC 2390, 2391. Sharing a home without sexual relations is a different question, of scandal and of occasion; explain the facts.	
☐ Attempted marriage outside the canonical form when bound to it, without a dispensation, and lived as married.	151
The union is not a marriage until it is convalidated or sanated (cann. 1108, 1117, 1156 to 1165). Ask the priest how to regularize it.	
☐ Led, pressured, groomed, seduced, or encouraged another person into sexual sin.	152
Scandal (CCC 2284, 2285). Name it if the other was a minor, a subordinate, or under vow.	
☐ Used withdrawal, or deliberately climaxed outside intercourse, to avoid conception.	153
Onanism (CCC 2370; Humanae Vitae 14).	
☐ Used a condom, diaphragm, spermicide, or other barrier.	154
CCC 2370; Humanae Vitae 14. The Church teaches the evil of contraception as definitive (Vademecum for Confessors 2.4).	
☐ Used hormonal contraception, such as the pill, patch, ring, injection, or implant, to prevent conception.	155
Humanae Vitae 14. Treatment of a real disease that incidentally suppresses fertility is not contraception (Humanae Vitae 15). Evangelium Vitae 13 warns that some chemical products act after fertilization; for ordinary combined pills such an effect is debated and unproven.	

☐ Used an intrauterine device.	156
IUDs act mainly before fertilization, but a post-fertilization effect is possible, especially for the copper IUD used as emergency contraception. <i>Evangelium Vitae</i> 13 names intrauterine devices among means that can act as abortifacients, a graver evil than contraception (<i>Vademecum for Confessors</i> 2.5). Whether it happened in any given cycle cannot be known. A hormonal IUD prescribed to treat a real disease, such as heavy bleeding, with sterility as a side effect, falls under the rule of <i>Humanae Vitae</i> 15; its possible post-fertilization effect still needs weighing with a physician and your confessor. Do not stop a prescribed treatment, or conclude that an abortion occurred, on the strength of this list.	
☐ Used emergency contraception after a consensual act.	157
Levonorgestrel (Plan B) acts mainly by delaying ovulation. In December 2022 the FDA removed the label statement that it may inhibit implantation, stating that evidence does not support an effect on implantation; the National Catholic Bioethics Center holds that post-fertilization effects are not fully excluded. Ulipristal (ella) also acts mainly by delaying ovulation; an endometrial effect is not excluded. Used to prevent conception after consensual intercourse, it is contraception. After rape, medications that prevent ovulation, sperm capacitation, or fertilization are permitted when there is no evidence that conception has occurred; interventions whose purpose or direct effect is to interfere with the implantation of an embryo are not (USCCB, <i>Ethical and Religious Directives</i> , n. 36, seventh edition, 2025). Do not conclude from this note that an abortion occurred; ask a physician and your confessor.	
☐ Underwent or procured direct sterilization for contraception, such as vasectomy or tubal ligation.	158
<i>Humanae Vitae</i> 14; CCC 2399. A procedure for a real disease with sterility as a side effect is different (<i>Humanae Vitae</i> 15). After repentance, marital relations may continue; ask the priest whether reversal is advisable in your case.	
☐ As a husband, deliberately climaxed outside intercourse with my wife, by hand, mouth, or any other means.	159
Grave in every form: withdrawal and condom use (Holy See, 1853, DS 2795; <i>Sacred Penitentiary</i> , 1916, DS 3634; <i>Casti Connubii</i> ; <i>Humanae Vitae</i> 14; CCC 2370); completion by hand or mouth is masturbation (<i>Persona Humana</i> 9; CCC 2352). An involuntary premature climax is not a sin.	
☐ As a wife, deliberately brought myself to climax apart from any marital act, or let my husband bring me to climax as a substitute for intercourse.	160
Grave (CCC 2352). Climax that belongs to a marital act is permitted; see Chastity in detail.	
☐ Had anal intercourse, even with my spouse.	161
Sodomy, grave for both spouses; a spouse may not consent to it (<i>Sacred Penitentiary</i> , 1916, DS 3634). As a brief prelude to natural intercourse, St. Alphonsus (<i>Theologia Moralis</i> , bk. VI, n. 916) held it mortal as the more common and truer opinion; Jone (<i>Moral Theology</i> , n. 757) held it not grave without sodomitic intention. That prelude case is disputed; carried to climax, it is grave on every view. Force or coercion is not consent; see item 134 and the note at the end of this commandment.	
☐ Used pornography, or fantasized about another person, to arouse myself before or during marital relations.	162
Lust and adultery of the heart (Mt 5:28; CCC 2354).	
☐ Used IVF, or artificial insemination that replaces the marital act.	163
CCC 2376, 2377; <i>Donum Vitae</i> II.B; <i>Dignitas Personae</i> 12, 13. Treatments that assist the act or restore fertility are permitted.	
☐ Used donor sperm or eggs, or a surrogate.	164
CCC 2376. Children so conceived have full human dignity.	
☐ Authorized the production, freezing, discarding, or destructive use of embryos.	165
CCC 2274, 2275; <i>Dignitas Personae</i> 18, 19. Ask for guidance about embryos already frozen.	
☐ Masturbated to provide a semen sample for testing or for assisted reproduction.	166
Forbidden even for medical purposes (Holy Office, 2 August 1929; <i>Donum Vitae</i> II.B.6). Some Catholic moralists, such as E. C. Brugger, accept collection during marital intercourse with a perforated, non-spermicidal device; others dispute it. Ask a Catholic physician and your confessor.	
☐ Created or shared sexual images of a real person without consent, including synthetic or AI-generated images.	167
Lust, and a grave injustice to the person depicted. Cf. CCC 2354, 2487; <i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (2025), nn. 87, 89.	
☐ Deliberately viewed or sought pornography: images, video, audio, or erotic writing.	168
CCC 2354. Written and audio erotica sought for arousal count. Involuntary exposure is not this sin.	
☐ Produced, bought, sold, or distributed pornography, including with AI tools, or paid for live sexual performances or camming.	169
CCC 2354, 2355.	

☐ Used sexual chat, sexting, or an AI companion or chatbot for sexual gratification. The medium does not change the act. Cf. CCC 2351; Persona Humana 10.	170
☐ Committed masturbation, alone or with a device. CCC 2352; Persona Humana 9. Habit, anxiety, and immaturity can reduce guilt; they do not make it light matter.	171
☐ Deliberately aroused myself for pleasure, even without climax. Grave outside the marital act (Persona Humana 9, 10).	172
☐ Took part in obscene conversation or entertainment for sexual gratification. Cf. CCC 2351, 2284; Eph 5:3-4; Persona Humana 10.	173
☐ Dressed or behaved immodestly on purpose to provoke lust. Cf. CCC 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2284.	174
☐ Deliberately desired to commit a sexual sin, even without acting on it. Desire takes the kind and gravity of the act desired (Mt 5:28). Name the object if it was a married person, a relative, someone of the same sex, or a minor.	175
☐ Deliberately entertained lustful thoughts or fantasies and took pleasure in them. A thought that comes unbidden and is rejected is not a sin. CCC 2351, 2520; McHugh and Callan, nn. 2505, 2506.	176
☐ Deliberately recalled past sexual sins with pleasure. Rejoicing in a past sin is a sin of the same kind. Cf. McHugh and Callan, n. 2507; CCC 2351.	177
☐ Looked at another person deliberately for lustful gratification. Mt 5:28.	178

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ Remained in a near occasion of grave sexual sin without necessity, or refused reasonable steps to leave it. A freely chosen near occasion must be left; this binds gravely. A necessary occasion, such as work or family, must be made remote by safeguards. CCC 2340, 2849; McHugh and Callan, n. 2538.	179
☐ Refused my spouse the marital act when reasonably requested, without a just reason. 1 Cor 7:3 to 5. The manuals held that the marital debt binds gravely when seriously and reasonably requested, with light matter when the request is not imperative or the refusal infrequent and without danger of incontinence; they list excusing causes such as adultery of the requesting spouse, the requester's drunkenness or insanity, danger to health or to offspring, and excessive or unreasonable demands, and a request for a sinful act never binds (McHugh and Callan, Moral Theology, vol. II, nn. 2614, 2615). Abstaining for a time by mutual consent is good (1 Cor 7:5). Current law speaks of equal duties and rights (can. 1135). A spouse may never force the other (Humanae Vitae 13). Gravity follows the seriousness of the request and of the refusal: an occasional refusal, or one made for health, exhaustion, or the other's condition, is not grave (manual teaching). A request made without regard for the spouse's condition and reasonable wishes is not a true act of love (Humanae Vitae 13).	180
☐ Used periodic abstinence, natural family planning, to avoid children without serious reasons. Licit for serious reasons, even for an indeterminate period (Humanae Vitae 10, 16; Vademecum for Confessors 2.6). Pius XII (29 October 1951) taught that serious motives can exempt spouses from the positive duty for a long time or even the whole marriage, but that using marriage while deliberately avoiding its primary duty without a grave motive sins against the meaning of married life. Gravity follows the reasons and the duration.	181
☐ As spouses, engaged in sexual touching without intending intercourse, with a real risk that the husband would climax outside it. Touches between spouses are licit. The manuals judged them grave only when they carried a proximate danger of climax outside intercourse. McHugh and Callan, n. 2618; CCC 2362.	182
☐ Used oral stimulation as foreplay in marital relations. Disputed. No magisterial ruling. Older authors ranged from venial, when ordered to intercourse, to grave; Grisez and West permit it in continuity with complete intercourse, and some faithful moralists reject it. Never to the husband's climax.	183
☐ Used sexual devices in marital relations. Disputed. No magisterial ruling. Grave when used as a substitute for intercourse or to bring about climax apart from it. CCC 2351, 2352, 2362.	184

☐ Practiced reserved embrace: intercourse deliberately ended without climax.	185
<i>Disputed.</i> Some older authors allowed it. The Holy Office (30 June 1952; AAS 44 [1952] 546) warned authors to stop describing and recommending it and forbade priests to speak as though no objection could be made to it; it did not declare it a mortal sin.	
☐ Exchanged explicit images with my spouse.	186
<i>Disputed.</i> No magisterial ruling. Grave when it feeds lust detached from the person, or risks exposing the images to others.	
☐ Sought out films, shows, music, books, or other media I knew would arouse lust.	187
Grave when sought for lust or when it is a near occasion of grave sin. Unsought exposure is no sin.	
☐ Read or watched sexually suggestive material out of curiosity, not for arousal.	188
The manuals: venial if it does not excite much; grave if it excites much, because of the danger of consent. For a serious reason, such as study or medicine, it is permitted, without consent to any pleasure. McHugh and Callan, nn. 2515, 2518; CCC 1737, 2340.	
☐ Kissed or embraced outside marriage in a way I knew was likely to arouse, though I did not seek arousal.	189
Grave when the danger of consent or climax is proximate; light when slight (manual teachings; cf. ST II-II q.154 a.4).	
☐ Told or enjoyed obscene jokes.	190
Grave when meant to arouse or when it gives serious scandal; light as crude humor. Cf. CCC 2351, 2284; Eph 5:3-4.	
☐ Dressed immodestly out of vanity or carelessness.	191
Immodesty is grave or light according to the danger it creates, the scandal given, and the intention (older manual teaching). Custom and context matter (CCC 2521 to 2524).	
☐ Pursued a romantic intimacy that violated the fidelity I owe my spouse.	192
Grave when it becomes a near occasion of adultery or a real betrayal of the marriage (CCC 2364, 2380). Not every friendship is infidelity.	

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Half-consented to impure thoughts, letting them linger with some willingness before rejecting them.	193
Imperfect consent is venial. Time taken to notice an unwanted thought and turn from it is not consent. Cf. CCC 1862, 1767.	
☐ Glanced carelessly at immodest images or people without seeking them out.	194
Venial at most when there is no lust and little danger. A deliberate lustful look is grave.	
☐ Was careless about modesty in small matters.	195
Cf. CCC 2521, 2524.	
☐ Used crude sexual language or humor without intent to arouse and without scandal.	196
Eph 5:3-4; McHugh and Callan, n. 2518.	

NOT A SIN IN ITSELF

Listed to prevent false guilt. Examine only what you freely chose.

Had a sexual dream, a nocturnal emission, or climax during sleep.

Not a sin (ST II-II q.154 a.5; McHugh and Callan, n. 2536; cf. CCC 1734). On waking, simply withhold consent from the pleasure; nothing more is required.

Felt spontaneous arousal or a bodily response I did not seek.

Not a sin without consent (cf. CCC 1734, 1767).

Had recurring or intrusive sexual thoughts, or took time to notice and redirect them.

Persistence is not consent (McHugh and Callan, n. 2505; cf. CCC 2847). The manuals' rule: one who habitually avoids mortal sin and doubts whether he consented may presume he did not.

Saw an immodest or sexual image unexpectedly.

Not a sin (cf. CCC 1735, 2847). Deliberately continuing to look for lust is different.

Experienced sexual attraction, including same-sex attraction.

The inclination is not a sin (CCC 2358; CDF, Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons, 1986, n. 3); only consent to lust or to acts is.

Enjoyed the pleasure of the marital act.

The Creator intended it; spouses do nothing wrong in seeking it, within just moderation (CCC 2362, 2363).

Had marital relations during pregnancy, menstruation, or breastfeeding, after menopause, or when one of us is infertile.

Permitted. Such acts remain legitimate though foreseen to be infertile (Humanae Vitae 11; CCC 2362), unless there is medical danger.

Felt arousal incidentally from a legitimate activity: medical care, hygiene, exercise, necessary study, or an affectionate embrace.

Indirectly voluntary and not consented to; permitted for a proportionate reason (cf. CCC 1737; McHugh and Callan, n. 2518).

Was subjected to abuse or coercion.

The victim is not guilty of what was imposed on them (CCC 1735, 2356; Vademecum for Confessors 3.13). Inability to resist, or conduct under threat, does not prove free consent. Seek safety and help, and tell the priest the circumstances without blaming yourself for another's violence.

Used treatment that restores sexual function or fertility within marriage.

Treatment that assists the marital act is permitted (Dignitas Personae 12, 13).

What counts, married and unmarried

This section sets out what counts as a sin against chastity, and how gravely, for the unmarried and the married. It follows the Catechism and the magisterial documents where they speak, and the common teaching of the approved manuals where they do not. Where faithful moralists disagree and the Church has not ruled, it says so. Your confessor's guidance governs your own case.

TERMS

Sexual pleasure	The arousal and climax proper to the sexual act; the manuals call it venereal pleasure.
Complete and incomplete	Complete means climax, which in a man is ordinarily ejaculation; some conditions and treatments separate the two, and what counts morally is what was deliberately chosen. Incomplete means arousal short of climax. Outside marriage both are grave matter when deliberately sought.
Directly and indirectly voluntary	Direct: sought or consented to for itself. Indirect: a foreseen side effect of a legitimate act, not consented to.
The marital act	Complete intercourse between husband and wife in which the husband's climax takes place within the wife's vagina.
Onanism	Deliberate climax of the husband outside intercourse, including withdrawal.
Near occasion	A person, place, or thing that in your own experience leads to grave sin.

FIVE RULES

- 1 Outside marriage, all sexual pleasure deliberately sought or accepted is grave matter: complete or incomplete, alone or with another, in act, look, word, or thought (Persona Humana 9, 10; DS 2060).
- 2 Within marriage, sexual pleasure is good when it belongs to the marital act, before, during, or after it (CCC 2362).
- 3 The husband's climax may take place only within intercourse. Every other deliberate completion is grave: withdrawal, hand, mouth, condom, or any other means (Holy See, 1853, DS 2795; Humanae Vitae 14; CCC 2352).
- 4 Every marital act must remain open to life: no contraception and no sterilization (Humanae Vitae 11, 14). Periodic abstinence for serious reasons is permitted (Humanae Vitae 16).
- 5 Pleasure that arises unsought from a legitimate act, without consent, is no sin. The nearer the danger of climax, the graver the reason needed (the manuals' application of double effect).

OUTSIDE MARRIAGE: SINGLE, DATING, ENGAGED, OR WIDOWED

Crimson: grave matter. **Ochre:** depends on degree, or disputed. **Green:** permitted.

Grave	Intercourse	Fornication; adultery if either person is married; incest if related; rape if forced.
Grave	Oral or anal sex, mutual masturbation, genital touching, clothed or not	Grave, with or without climax.
Grave	Masturbation, or arousing oneself without climax	Grave (Persona Humana 9; CCC 2352).
Grave	Passionate or prolonged kissing sought for arousal	Grave (DS 2060).
By degree	Kissing or embracing that tends to arouse, though arousal is not sought	Grave when the danger is proximate; moderate it or stop.
Permitted	Brief affectionate kisses and embraces	No sin (ST II-II q.154 a.4). Engaged couples may show this kind of affection.

Grave	Pornography, erotica, sexting, cybersex, sexual AI chat	Grave (CCC 2354).
Grave	Consented sexual thoughts, desires, or fantasies	Grave; name the object if it changes the kind of sin.

Engagement gives no marital rights; the engaged are bound as the unmarried. Affection that neither seeks nor tends toward arousal is good. Avoid predictable occasions, such as being alone together late at night or overnight.

WITHIN MARRIAGE

Crimson: grave matter. **Ochre:** depends on degree, or disputed. **Green:** permitted.

Permitted	Complete intercourse, the husband's climax within the wife's vagina, at any time and in any position that allows it	Good (CCC 2362, 2363). Frequency is for the spouses, within just moderation.
Permitted	Kisses, caresses, and genital touching as foreplay	Good when they lead to or accompany intercourse and the husband does not deliberately climax outside it.
Permitted	The wife's climax during intercourse, or by touch immediately afterward if she did not reach it	Permitted according to most older authors (St. Alphonsus, bk. VI, n. 919); so also Grisez and Catholic Answers.
By degree	The wife's climax during foreplay, with intercourse following	Permitted by Grisez (Living a Christian Life, ch. 9, q. E) and many recent moralists when continuous with a complete act. The older manuals spoke of arousal beforehand and completion afterward.
By degree	Touches without intending intercourse	Licit; grave only with a proximate danger of the husband's climax outside intercourse.
By degree	Oral stimulation as foreplay	Disputed; never to the husband's climax.
By degree	Sexual devices	Disputed; grave as a substitute for intercourse or for climax apart from it.
By degree	Reserved embrace	The Holy Office (1952) forbade presenting it as unobjectionable; it did not declare it mortal.
By degree	Condom use to prevent infection	A Roman response of 1853 (DS 2795) condemned condomistic intercourse as intrinsically evil; whether that applies when the only aim is to prevent infection is disputed. The CDF note of 21 December 2010 did not address marriage. Seek guidance.
By degree	Refusing the marital act without a just reason	Grave when serious (1 Cor 7:3 to 5).
By degree	Periodic abstinence without serious reasons	Sinful when long or lifelong (Pius XII, 1951); licit for serious reasons, even indefinitely (Humanae Vitae 10).
Grave	The husband's climax outside intercourse: withdrawal, hand, mouth, condom	Grave: onanism (DS 2795; Humanae Vitae 14).
Grave	The wife's climax apart from any marital act	Grave (CCC 2352).
Grave	Anal intercourse	Grave: sodomy (DS 3634). As a brief prelude, mortal by the more common and truer opinion (St. Alphonsus); Jone dissented.
Grave	Contraception of any kind; direct sterilization	Grave (Humanae Vitae 14; CCC 2370, 2399).
Grave	Pornography or fantasies of others; involving a third person	Grave (Mt 5:28; CCC 2380).
Grave	Forcing the act on a spouse	Grave (Humanae Vitae 13).

Grave	IVF, insemination replacing the act, donor gametes, surrogacy, masturbation for a semen sample	Grave; licit collection methods exist.
Permitted	Relations during pregnancy, menstruation, breastfeeding, infertility, after menopause, or after a repented sterilization	Permitted (<i>Humanae Vitae</i> 11), unless there is medical danger.
Permitted	Treatment that restores function or fertility	Permitted (<i>Dignitas Personae</i> 12, 13).

WHEN, WHERE, AND WITH WHOM

When	No day or season forbids marital relations. The Roman Catechism exhorted married people to observe continence before Communion, for at least three days; current law (can. 919) imposes no such period.
Where	A sexual act in a church or other sacred place adds sacrilege; the manuals included marital intercourse there without necessity (<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> , 1912, <i>Sacrilege</i>). A sexual act in public, or where children may see, adds grave scandal.
With whom	A sin against chastity by or with a person in holy orders, or a religious under perpetual vows, adds sacrilege for both; a private vow adds the breach of the vow. Name the vow or the orders. Kinship makes it incest; a spouse's existing marriage makes it adultery; the same sex, a minor, force, or an animal each changes its kind.

MARITAL SITUATIONS

Single, dating, engaged, or widowed	Unmarried. Every sexual act, and all deliberately sought sexual pleasure, is grave matter.
Married in a civil ceremony only, when bound to the Church's form	Not married in the Church's eyes. Relations are fornication, or adultery if either is bound by another marriage, until the union is convalidated or sanated (cann. 1108, 1117, 1156 to 1165).
Divorced and civilly remarried without a declaration of nullity	The prior marriage is presumed valid (can. 1060); relations with the new partner are adultery as objective matter (CCC 2384). The earlier discipline (<i>Familiaris Consortio</i> 84; CDF, 1994; <i>Sacramentum Caritatis</i> 29; CCC 1650) asks those who cannot separate to live as brother and sister before absolution and Communion. <i>Amoris Laetitia</i> (n. 305 and note 351), as interpreted in Pope Francis's 2016 letter to the Buenos Aires bishops (published as authentic magisterium) and the DDF reply to Cardinal Duka (25 September 2023), allows absolution and Communion in particular cases, after pastoral discernment, where responsibility is diminished, even without full continence; the DDF reply keeps the proposal of continence, denies that this is a general permission, and places the discernment under the bishop. Pope Leo XIV's message of 19 March 2026 recalls chapter VIII with approval without addressing this point. Theologians still debate how these texts fit the earlier discipline. Explain your situation to the priest and ask for that accompaniment.
Validly married, then civilly divorced	Still married before God. Relations with anyone else are adultery.
Consecrated or ordained	For those bound by a vow of chastity or by clerical celibacy, every sin against chastity also violates that obligation (cann. 277, 1191). For those in sacred orders and for religious with perpetual vows the manuals count it a personal sacrilege, shared by the partner; the weight of opinion did not extend that to a privately made vow (<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> , 1912, <i>Sacrilege</i>). Married deacons and married priests are bound instead by conjugal chastity.

THOUGHTS, DESIRES, AND CONSENT

Temptation is the thought, image, or feeling as it arises. Sin begins only with deliberate consent (CCC 1734, 1735, 1857 to 1862, 2847; McHugh and Callan, nn. 2505 to 2508).

There are three ways of consenting. Desire, wanting to do the act, takes the kind and gravity of the act desired. Delight, deliberately enjoying the imagined act without intending to do it, is grave in sexual matters. Rejoicing in a past sin renews its kind.

If you were half asleep or only half aware, there was no full deliberation, and any sin was at most venial. If you resisted, or rejected the thought when you noticed it, you did not consent. The manuals’ rule for peace of conscience: one who habitually avoids mortal sin and doubts whether he consented may presume he did not.

HOW TO CONFESS THESE SINS

Say the kind of sin, the number, and any circumstance that changes the kind. No graphic detail and no names are needed; the priest asks only what he needs, and may not ask the name of an accomplice (can. 979).

Examples: “I committed adultery; I am married; four times.” “I consented to impure thoughts about a married woman, about ten times.” “I committed masturbation, about three times a week for two months.” “My wife and I used withdrawal, about weekly for a year.” “I viewed pornography, about twenty times.” “My fiancée and I committed fornication, about eight times.”

Circumstances that change the kind and must be named: marriage (and whether both were married), kinship, the same sex, a minor, force, a vow or holy orders, a sacred place, an animal. Mention also if you led another into the sin.

WHEN A SPOUSE INSISTS ON CONTRACEPTION

Pius XI taught that a spouse who, for a grave cause, reluctantly allows the perversion of the act does not sin, provided he or she seeks to dissuade the other (Casti Connubii 59).

The Vademecum for Confessors (1997, 3.13) permits such cooperation only when three conditions are met together: the cooperating spouse’s own act is not illicit in itself; there are proportionally grave reasons; and one seeks, patiently, with prayer, charity, and dialogue, to help the other desist. Violence or unjust imposition that cannot be resisted is not cooperation at all.

The responses the Vademecum cites distinguish the cases. When the other spouse withdraws, one’s own act remains a true marital act, and for grave cause, such as a threat of death or grave harm, it may be allowed (Sacred Penitentiary, 1916, DS 3634). Intercourse with a condom is not a true marital act, and a spouse may not knowingly take part in it (Holy See, 1853, DS 2795). Sodomy may never be consented to, even to avoid death (DS 3634). Force that cannot be resisted is not cooperation (Vademecum 3.13). Methods that can cause abortion need particular care (3.14). Not initiating relations with a spouse who intends to contracept is pastoral counsel, not a Church text.

SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.

Justice in property, work, money, and stewardship, and the desire for another’s goods.

How much is grave? The older manuals distinguish relative grave matter, measured by the owner’s circumstances, from an absolute sum grave even against the wealthiest owner or a corporation (Prümmer, Handbook of Moral Theology, n. 263). The Catholic Encyclopedia (1912, Theft) put relative grave matter at about a day’s wage of an ordinary worker, and far less from a poor person. Petty thefts are venial in themselves but coalesce into grave matter when there is intent to reach a large sum, or when they are repeated at short intervals without revoking the intention; the common teaching required about half again the grave amount from one owner, twice from several (Prümmer, n. 264). Innocent XI condemned the view that one need not restore, under pain of mortal sin, what was taken by small thefts, however large the total (prop. 38, 2 March 1679; DS 2138). This is the manuals’ common teaching, not current law. Restitution is owed in every case, in proportion to the harm (CCC 2412).

GRAVE MATTER	Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.
☐ Withheld or defrauded workers of their just wages. Cries to heaven (CCC 1867). CCC 2434. Restitution owed.	197
☐ Oppressed or exploited migrants, widows, orphans, the poor, the elderly, the disabled, or others who are vulnerable. Cries to heaven (CCC 1867). Restitution owed. The Catechism’s list names the oppression of the foreigner, the widow, the orphan, and the poor (CCC 1867).	198
☐ Stole from a church, or stole sacred objects or Church property. Sacrilège when the object is sacred; for Church goods, can. 1376. Restitution owed.	199
☐ Stole money, goods, merchandise, supplies, or services of serious value. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2408, 1754.	200
☐ Stole from an employer, including falsified timesheets or serious theft of paid time. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409.	201

☐ Embezzled, misappropriated funds, forged documents, or committed fraud. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409, 2484.	202	
☐ Materially deceived investors, lenders, partners, or regulators, or manipulated prices or markets. CCC 2409. Restitution owed.	203	
☐ Paid or took bribes, or committed extortion. CCC 2409. Restitution owed.	204	
☐ Cheated on taxes, contracts, insurance, benefits, billing, expenses, or business records in a serious matter. CCC 2409 names tax evasion. Restitution owed.	205	
☐ Unjustly damaged or destroyed another's property of serious value. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409.	206	
☐ Knowingly bought, received, or kept stolen property. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2412.	207	
☐ Kept found or borrowed property of serious value when I could have returned it. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409.	208	
☐ Refused to pay a serious debt I could justly pay. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2411.	209	
☐ Refused to make restitution for theft, fraud, or damage when able. Restitution is required (CCC 2412); one who can repair cannot be absolved without at least the sincere intention to do so (common teaching). Real inability to repay now is different.	210	
☐ Profited from predatory lending, financial abuse, or an exploitative scheme. CCC 2409, 2449. Restitution owed.	211	

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ Cheated at games or in wagers. Grave unless the harm is so slight the loser could not reasonably think it significant (CCC 2413).	212	
☐ Gambled away money owed to others or needed by my dependents, or gambled dishonestly. Grave when it deprives others of what they are owed or need (CCC 2413).	213	
☐ Charged unjust prices or exploited another person's necessity. Grave when the gain or harm is serious (CCC 2409).	214	
☐ Used dishonest business practices, false advertising, or deceptive pricing. Gravity follows the harm done. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409, 2482, 2484.	215	
☐ Wasted my employer's time, or did poor work through negligence. Grave when the loss is serious. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409.	216	
☐ Was seriously negligent with property, funds, data, or resources entrusted to me, or seriously wasted them. Grave when the loss is serious. Cf. CCC 1736, 2409.	217	
☐ Used pirated software, media, or other copyrighted work without right. Grave when the owner's loss is serious; light for small matters. Cf. CCC 2408, 2411.	218	
☐ Deliberately desired to take another's goods unjustly. Tenth Commandment (CCC 2536). The desire takes the gravity of the theft desired.	219	
☐ Envied another's possessions, status, success, gifts, or opportunities. Grave when I wished them grave harm or rejoiced in their serious misfortune (CCC 2539); light as passing resentment.	220	
☐ Let greed dominate my choices. Grave when it led me to injustice or to neglect grave duties. Cf. CCC 2536, 2540.	221	

☐ Failed to help the poor according to my real means. The duty is real (CCC 2446) and its measure is not fixed. Grave when I refused easy help to someone in grave need.	222
☐ Used natural resources or property with serious waste or disregard for the common good. Grave in serious cases (CCC 2415).	223
☐ Concealed a material conflict of interest while managing another's affairs. Grave when serious injustice results (CCC 2409).	224
☐ Squandered the means to meet a just obligation, then failed to meet it. Honest insolvency is different.	225

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Stole small things or small amounts. Restitution is still owed. Repeated small thefts coalesce into grave matter when an intention or a short interval joins them (manual teaching: Prümmer, nn. 263, 264). Cf. CCC 2408, 1754; Prümmer, nn. 263, 264.	226
☐ Borrowed carelessly, or was slow to return small items. Cf. CCC 2409.	227
☐ Was stingy, or too attached to comfort, luxury, possessions, or status. Cf. CCC 2536, 2544.	228
☐ Indulged envy without ill will. Cf. CCC 2539, 1767.	229
☐ Wasted food, money, or goods in small ways. Cf. CCC 2409, 2415.	230

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Truth, reputation, secrets, and privacy.

Truthful reporting of wrongdoing, disclosure necessary to protect someone, and fair criticism based on evidence are not detraction (CCC 2477, 2488 to 2491). The seal of confession is absolute (can. 983).

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

☐ Committed perjury, or gave false testimony in a serious matter. CCC 2476.	231
☐ Committed calumny: made false statements that harmed another's reputation. Restitution owed. CCC 2477, 2479. Repair the reputation (CCC 2487).	232
☐ Falsely denounced an innocent confessor for soliciting in confession. Censure: automatic interdict (can. 1390 §1). Absolution requires first a formal retraction and readiness to repair harm (can. 982). A truthful report is never forbidden.	233
☐ Committed detraction: revealed another's serious hidden faults without a valid reason. Restitution owed. CCC 2477.	234
☐ Falsified records, credentials, research, data, citations, accounts, reports, or official documents in a serious matter. An honest error, corrected when found, is different.	235
☐ Used impersonation, fake accounts, deceptive editing, or manipulated or synthetic media to commit grave deception or injustice. Clearly labeled fiction or satire is not a lie. Cf. CCC 2482, 2484; Antiqua et Nova (2025), n. 87.	236
☐ Told a lie that caused grave harm or injustice. CCC 2484.	237

☐ Revealed a professional secret or confidence in a serious matter without sufficient reason. CCC 2491.	238
☐ Read or disclosed private messages, files, records, or communications in a serious matter, without permission or authority. Cf. CCC 2492; can. 220.	239
☐ Recorded a confession, or made one public. Can. 1386 §3; the penalty is not automatic.	240
☐ Failed to correct a serious falsehood I spread, or to repair a reputation I damaged, when able. Restitution owed. CCC 2487.	241
☐ Blackmailed someone with confidential or intimate information. Also extortion under the Seventh Commandment. Cf. CCC 2409, 2491, 2492.	242

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

☐ Made rash judgments, treating another's guilt as certain without sufficient evidence. Grave when the fault assumed is serious and the judgment fully deliberate (CCC 2477, 2478).	243
☐ Spread rumors, gossip, or private information irresponsibly. Gravity follows the harm to reputation. Cf. CCC 2477, 2479.	244
☐ Listened to or encouraged damaging gossip when I should have stopped it. Grave when I provoked it or it caused serious harm. Cf. CCC 1868, 2477.	245
☐ Revealed a secret entrusted to me. Grave when the matter is serious or harm results. Cf. CCC 2491.	246
☐ Plagiarized, or presented another's work as my own. Grave when it involves serious fraud or harm, as with degrees, publications, or credentials. Cf. CCC 2482, 2484.	247
☐ Cheated in school, research, professional testing, or evaluation. Grave when it gains a serious undue advantage or harms others. Cf. CCC 2482, 2484.	248
☐ Used flattery, hypocrisy, deception, or manipulation for unjust gain. Grave when the gain is serious or it leads another into grave sin.	249
☐ Failed to speak the truth when justice or my office required it. Grave when serious harm followed. You do not owe confidential information to someone with no right to it (CCC 2489).	250
☐ Concealed or destroyed important evidence to defeat justice or to protect ongoing abuse. Grave when serious injustice results (CCC 2484, 2489).	251
☐ Submitted work written by another person or by an AI system as my own where my own work was required. Grave when it involves serious fraud or harm; honestly disclosed and authorized help is different. Cf. CCC 2482, 2484.	252

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

☐ Told lies that harmed no one, such as excuses or lies to avoid embarrassment. CCC 2484.	253
☐ Exaggerated or boasted. Cf. CCC 2481.	254
☐ Spoke of others' small faults, or spoke uncharitably. Cf. CCC 2477, 2479.	255
☐ Pried into others' affairs out of curiosity in small matters. Cf. CCC 2492.	256

☐ Held groundless suspicions of others.
Cf. CCC 2477, 2478.

257

The minimum obligations of Catholic life.

CCC 2041 to 2043. Sunday and holy day Mass is under the Third Commandment.

United States and Puerto Rico: holy days and days of penance

In the United States the norms of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops apply. Puerto Rico has its own conference, the Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña, and its norms, not the USCCB's, apply there.

United States, holy days of obligation besides Sundays: January 1 (Mary, Mother of God); the Ascension, kept on Thursday in the provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Omaha, and Philadelphia and on the following Sunday everywhere else; August 15 (the Assumption); November 1 (All Saints); December 8 (the Immaculate Conception); December 25 (Christmas). When January 1, August 15, or November 1 falls on a Saturday or a Monday, the obligation to attend Mass is lifted. When a holy day is moved because it falls on a Sunday, as December 8 is in some years, the obligation does not move with it (Dicastery for Divine Worship, letter of 23 January 2025). Hawaii keeps only December 8 and December 25.

United States, days of penance: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence, and the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat. On the other Fridays of the year abstinence from meat remains the recommended penance, but another penance may take its place (USCCB, Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence, 1966). Fasting means one full meal and two smaller meals that together do not equal a full meal, with nothing between meals; it binds from the eighteenth birthday until the fifty-ninth, and the sick, pregnant and nursing women, and those whose health or work requires it are excused. Abstinence binds from the fourteenth birthday. The Easter duty (item 259) may be fulfilled in the United States from the First Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday.

Puerto Rico: the holy days of obligation besides Sundays are January 1, January 6 (the Epiphany), and December 25, as parishes and the conference's liturgical calendar publish them; the conference's decree itself was not located, so confirm with your pastor. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence; the other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence; the remaining Fridays of the year are days of penance, satisfied by abstaining from meat and liquor, by an act of piety such as the family rosary, Mass, or the Stations of the Cross, by visiting the sick, or by almsgiving (complementary norms, arts. 23 and 24, printed in the conference's calendar). Abstinence binds from the fourteenth birthday; fasting from the eighteenth until the fifty-ninth. The calendar prints no extension of the Easter duty beyond the Easter season; can. 920 lets it be fulfilled at another time for a just cause. Checked on 2 October 2026 against published copies of the calendar, not against the decrees themselves.

When traveling, ask locally; canon law has particular rules for travelers (cann. 12, 13).

GRAVE MATTER

Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| ☐ Went more than a year without confessing while conscious of mortal sin. | 258 |
| Can. 989. The precept concerns grave sins; a year without confession when one has only venial sins is not a mortal sin. | <input type="text"/> |
| ☐ Failed to receive Holy Communion, properly disposed, at least once during the Easter season. | 259 |
| Can. 920; for a just cause it may be fulfilled at another time of the year. | <input type="text"/> |

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| ☐ Broke the days of fasting and abstinence. | 260 |
| Paenitemini (1966, norm II §2) teaches that substantial observance binds gravely. The Sacred Congregation of the Council (24 February 1967; AAS 59 [1967] 229) read the prescribed observance as a whole: one sins gravely who, without an excusing cause, omits a notable part of it, in quantity or in quality. Abstinence from meat binds from age 14. Fasting binds from the eighteenth birthday until the fifty-ninth birthday, when the sixtieth year begins (cann. 97, 1252). Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence; Fridays are days of abstinence unless a solemnity falls on them (can. 1251). Where the bishops' conference allows it, as the USCCB does in the United States, another penance may replace Friday abstinence outside Lent (can. 1253). For the United States and Puerto Rico, see the note at the head of this section. An inadvertent slip is no sin. | <input type="text"/> |
| ☐ Failed to support the Church according to my means. | 261 |
| Grave only in serious neglect (CCC 2043; can. 222). There is no fixed percentage. | <input type="text"/> |
| ☐ Deliberately refused a penance given in confession when I could perform it. | 262 |
| Can. 981. A later failure does not undo the absolution; explain real difficulty to the priest. | <input type="text"/> |

- ☐ Culpably neglected to receive Confirmation.
Can. 890.

263

SINS OF OMISSION AND WORKS OF MERCY

What I failed to do.

An omission is a real sin. Its gravity depends on the duty neglected and the need left unmet.

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE

The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.

- ☐ Failed to help, or ignored, a sick, elderly, isolated, grieving, or vulnerable person whom I had a duty and reasonable ability to help.

264

Grave when the duty was serious and the need grave. Cf. CCC 2447, 2448.

- ☐ Failed to correct, teach, counsel, console, or defend another when my office or relationship required it.

265

Fraternal correction binds seriously when the other's danger is grave, correction is likely to help, no one else will give it, and it costs me no grave inconvenience.

LIGHT MATTER

Venial. Confession recommended, not required (CCC 1458).

- ☐ Neglected the works of mercy when ordinary opportunities came, where no serious duty bound me.

266

Corporal: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead. Spiritual: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead. Cf. CCC 2447.

COOPERATION

Nine ways of cooperating in another's sin

Each takes the gravity of the sin it serves. Formal cooperation, sharing the other's intention, in a grave sin is itself grave. Material cooperation is allowed only for a proportionate reason, and never as immediate cooperation in an intrinsically evil act.

- ☐ By counsel: advised another to sin.
CCC 1868.

267

- ☐ By command: ordered another to sin.
CCC 1868.

268

- ☐ By consent: approved another's sin, or gave the consent it needed.
CCC 1868.

269

- ☐ By provocation: goaded or provoked another into sin.
Cf. CCC 1868, 2284.

270

- ☐ By praise or flattery: applauded or flattered sinful conduct.
CCC 1868, 2480.

271

- ☐ By concealment: covered up wrongdoing so it could continue.
CCC 1868.

272

- ☐ By partaking: joined in or materially assisted wrongdoing without sufficient reason.
CCC 1868.

273

- ☐ By silence: failed to speak or act when I had the duty and ability to prevent grave wrongdoing.
CCC 1868.

274

- ☐ By defense: defended or justified conduct I knew to be gravely wrong.
Cf. CCC 1868, 2480.

275

ROOTS

The seven capital sins

The capital sins are the roots of the others. Examine them for patterns; the particular acts are confessed under the commandments above.

SIN	GRAVE WHEN IT	LIGHT WHEN IT IS
Pride	Refuses submission to God or His law, or holds others in serious contempt.	Vanity, boasting, touchiness, reluctance to admit fault.
Avarice	Leads to injustice, or to preferring wealth to God's law.	Ordinary attachment to money or possessions.
Lust	Is deliberately consented to; there is no light matter here (see the Sixth and Ninth).	Only partly consented to.
Envy	Wishes grave harm to another, or rejoices in their serious misfortune (CCC 2539).	Passing resentment at another's good.
Gluttony	Causes complete drunkenness, serious harm to health, or neglect of grave duties.	Ordinary excess in food or drink.
Wrath	Becomes hatred, desire for serious revenge, or serious harm (CCC 2302).	Impatience or passing temper.
Sloth	Refuses the joy that comes from God, or leads to neglect of grave duties such as Sunday Mass (CCC 2094, 2733).	Laziness in prayer or duty.

SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae II-II q.14 a.2; CCC 1864.

Despair of salvation
Presumption of God's mercy
Impugning the known truth
Envy of another's spiritual good
Obstinacy in sin
Final impenitence

SINS THAT CRY TO HEAVEN

CCC 1867. Older catechisms count four: willful murder, sodomy, oppression of the poor, and defrauding workers of their wages.

The blood of Abel: murder
The sin of the Sodomites
The cry of the people oppressed in Egypt
The cry of the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan
Injustice to the wage earner

STATE OF LIFE

State of life and modern conduct

Falsified research and records are under the Eighth Commandment; theft and fraud under the Seventh; abuse of authority under the Fourth.

POSITIONS OF TRUST: CLERGY, RELIGIOUS, PROFESSIONALS, TEACHERS, CAREGIVERS, FIDUCIARIES

GRAVE MATTER	Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.
☐ Used a subordinate, student, patient, client, research subject, employee, or other dependent for personal, financial, sexual, or reputational advantage. Cf. CCC 2287, 2409, 2356.	276
☐ Failed to follow safeguarding duties, or to act on serious abuse, when justice and my role required action. Cf. CCC 2265, 1868.	277
☐ Breached a fiduciary duty in a serious matter: self-dealing, undisclosed conflicts of interest, or misuse of entrusted funds or confidential information. Restitution owed. Cf. CCC 2409, 2411, 2491.	278
☐ As a cleric, or a layperson holding office in the Church, committed a sexual offense against a minor or vulnerable adult, or acquired or kept sexual images of minors. Can. 1398. Also a crime.	279

☐ As a priest, directly violated the seal of confession.	280
Censure: automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See (can. 1386 §1).	
☐ As a confessor, solicited a penitent to sexual sin in, at the occasion of, or under the pretext of confession.	281
Can. 1385.	
☐ As a priest, attempted to absolve an accomplice in a sexual sin, outside danger of death.	282
Censure: automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See (cann. 977, 1384).	

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE	The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.
☐ Violated confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, or safety standards.	283
Grave when serious harm or serious risk results. Cf. CCC 2295, 2491, 2288.	
☐ Took credit for another's work, or denied proper credit.	284
Grave when it seriously harms the other's career or reputation. Cf. CCC 2482, 2484, 2479.	
☐ Neglected the duties of my office or profession.	285
Grave when others suffer serious harm, or face grave risk. Cf. CCC 1736, 2409, 2288.	
☐ Culpably neglected the Liturgy of the Hours or other prayer my clerical or religious state obliges.	286
Can. 276 §2 3°; permanent deacons as the bishops' conference determines; for religious, also their proper law.	
☐ Violated a vow or obligation of chastity, poverty, or obedience binding my state.	287
Gravity follows the obligation and the act (can. 1191).	
☐ Failed to provide the sacraments when my office imposed a serious duty and I could reasonably act.	288
Cann. 986, 1001.	

ONLINE CONDUCT

GRAVE MATTER	Mortal sin if done with full knowledge and deliberate consent. Confess by kind and number.
☐ Used technology to stalk, threaten, extort, sexually exploit, or defraud.	289
Cf. CCC 2409, 2356, 2492, 2303.	
☐ Organized or joined online harassment, or a campaign to destroy someone's reputation.	290
Restitution owed. Repair the reputation. Cf. CCC 2477, 2479, 2487; Antiqua et Nova (2025), n. 89.	

GRAVE OR LIGHT BY DEGREE	The note gives the dividing line. If unsure, describe the act and let the priest judge.
☐ Shared private images, messages, recordings, personal data, or confidential information without right.	291
Grave when serious harm or a serious violation of privacy results. Sexual images are under the Sixth. Cf. CCC 2491, 2492; Antiqua et Nova (2025), nn. 90 to 93.	
☐ Bullied or humiliated others online.	292
Grave when it causes serious harm. Cf. CCC 1935, 2479, 2303.	
☐ Used anonymous accounts to do wrong I would not do openly.	293
Gravity follows the act. Cf. CCC 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753, 1754, 2482.	
☐ Used another person's account, identity, work, or data dishonestly.	294
Grave when serious harm results. Cf. CCC 2409, 2482, 2492.	
☐ Published someone's private identifying information to expose them to harassment or danger.	295
Grave when the risk or injustice is serious. Cf. CCC 2492, 2269; Antiqua et Nova (2025), nn. 90 to 93.	
☐ Neglected reasonable security for sensitive data entrusted to me.	296
Gravity follows the duty and the risk. Cf. CCC 1736, 2491, 2492; Antiqua et Nova (2025), nn. 90 to 93.	
☐ Let time online crowd out prayer, work, or family duties.	297
Grave when a serious duty is neglected. Cf. CCC 2098, 2218, 2228, 2409.	

REPAIR

Restitution and repair

Restitution binds in proportion to the harm, and gravely when the harm is serious. Restitution and the repair of reputation are required (CCC 2412, 2487); absolution requires at least the sincere intention to repair (common teaching). If the owner cannot be found, ask the priest; the traditional practice is to give the value to the poor or to the Church. If you cannot repay now, the duty remains until you can.

☐ Failed to return stolen, borrowed, or found property, or its value, when able. Cf. CCC 2409, 2412.	298
☐ Failed to repay a just debt when able. Cf. CCC 2411.	299
☐ Failed to correct a serious lie, or to repair reputational harm I caused. Cf. CCC 2487.	300
☐ Failed to compensate for damage, fraud, or unjust enrichment when able. Cf. CCC 2412.	301

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

Censures

A few sins carry an automatic canonical penalty, incurred by the act itself. Excommunication bars one from the sacraments; an interdict bars one from receiving them and from ministerial roles in the liturgy. The list below follows the 1983 Code as revised in 2021 and covers the penalties a layperson can incur.

OFFENSE	AUTOMATIC PENALTY	CANON
Apostasy, heresy, or schism	Excommunication	1364 §1
Throwing away the consecrated species, or taking or keeping them for a sacrilegious purpose	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	1382 §1
Procuring a completed abortion, including accomplices without whom it would not have happened	Excommunication	1397 §2; 1329 §2
Physical force against the Pope	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	1370 §1
Physical force against a bishop	Interdict	1370 §2
Attempting to confer holy orders on a woman, or a woman attempting to receive them	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	1379 §3
Attempting to celebrate Mass without being a priest, or, without the power to absolve validly, attempting to absolve or hearing a sacramental confession	Interdict	1379 §1
Falsely denouncing a confessor for solicitation	Interdict	1390 §1
A religious in perpetual vows who is not a cleric attempting marriage, even civilly	Interdict	1394 §2

PENALTIES THAT CONCERN CLERGY

OFFENSE	AUTOMATIC PENALTY	CANON
A confessor directly violating the seal of confession	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	1386 §1
A priest attempting to absolve an accomplice in a sexual sin, outside danger of death	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	977; 1384
Consecrating a bishop without a pontifical mandate, and the one consecrated	Excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See	1387
A cleric attempting marriage, even civilly	Suspension	1394 §1

No automatic penalty is incurred by anyone under 18, by one who did not know, through no fault of his own, that a penalty was attached, or by one who acted from grave fear, serious passion, imperfect use of reason, or without full imputability (can. 1323; 1324 §1 and §3). Crass, supine, or affected ignorance does not excuse (can. 1325). Where no penalty is incurred, the moral question remains and is judged by knowledge and consent. Penalties attach to external violations that are gravely imputable (can. 1321 §2); an interior doubt or thought incurs no penalty, whatever the table may seem to say.

Confess the act plainly; do not decide the penalty yourself, and do not stay away from confession because a censure may be involved. Any priest with faculties may absolve the sin of abortion and remit its censure (*Misericordia et misera* 12). In danger of death any priest may absolve from all sins and censures (can. 976). Otherwise the priest applies his faculties and any required recourse (cann. 1354 to 1357).

Effects: excommunication bars receiving and celebrating the sacraments and exercising ecclesiastical offices; interdict bars receiving the sacraments and ministerial roles in the liturgy; suspension forbids some or all acts of the power of orders or of governance, or the exercise of rights or functions attached to an office (cann. 1331 to 1333).

Penalties of the 1917 Code that were dropped in 1983, such as the excommunication for joining the Freemasons (1917 Code, can. 2335), are no longer in force. Where the act is gravely wrong, it remains so.

STEP 4

Final review before entering

- ☐ Have I deliberately left out any mortal sin out of shame or fear?
- ☐ For each mortal sin, do I know the kind and the number, or the frequency and duration?
- ☐ Is there a circumstance that changes the kind of sin and must be mentioned?
- ☐ Does any sin carry a censure that I should mention plainly?
- ☐ Do I sincerely reject these sins and intend, with God's help, to avoid them and their near occasions?
- ☐ Do I owe restitution, repayment, correction of a lie, or repair of a reputation?
- ☐ Is there an ongoing situation I should explain plainly and ask guidance about?

Involuntary thoughts, feelings, temptations, dreams, intrusive images, and impulses are not sins merely because they occur. Moral responsibility concerns what is knowingly and freely chosen.

STEP 5

In the confessional

What the sacrament asks of you is to confess your sins with sorrow and a purpose of amendment and to receive absolution. The prayers below are the customary ones; none is required. If you do not know them, tell the priest and he will lead you; do not put off confession for that. The current rite in outline: greeting and Sign of the Cross; a short reading from Scripture, if the priest offers one; your confession; counsel and penance; your act of contrition; absolution; thanksgiving and dismissal.

- 1 Kneel, or sit if you cannot kneel, make the Sign of the Cross, and say: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." If the priest gives the customary blessing, answer "Amen."

LATIN

Dominus sit in corde tuo et in labiis tuis, ut rite confitearis omnia peccata tua. In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

ENGLISH

The Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest rightly confess all thy sins. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

In the current rite the priest may begin with the Sign of the Cross and an invitation to trust in God, such as: "May God, who has shone his light in our hearts, grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy." Answer "Amen."

- 2 Say the first part of the Confiteor (customary, not required), striking your breast three times at "through my fault":

LATIN

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis, et tibi, Pater, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere: mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.

ENGLISH

I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed: through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.

- 3 Say: "My last confession was ____ ago." Then your sins: mortal sins first, by kind and number, with any circumstance that changes the kind of sin; then venial sins if you wish.
- 4 Close with these words, then finish the Confiteor (customary):

For these and all my other sins which I cannot now remember, I am heartily sorry, purpose amendment, and humbly ask pardon of God, and penance and absolution of you, Father.

The closing words follow Challoner's Garden of the Soul (1740), lightly modernized. To purpose amendment is to resolve to amend.

LATIN

Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaellem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes Sanctos, et te, Pater, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.

ENGLISH

Therefore I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, Father, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

If you confess only venial sins, you may add a sin of your past life already forgiven, as many confessors advise; with only doubtful sins or imperfections it is necessary. For example: "I also include the sins of my past life, especially against charity."

- 5 Listen to the counsel. Accept the penance; if you missed it, ask him to repeat it.
- 6 When the priest asks, say the Act of Contrition, ending on a clear Amen. In the traditional rite you say it while he pronounces the absolution instead.
- 7 The priest gives absolution. Answer "Amen."
- 8 In the current rite he may add: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good." Answer: "For his mercy endures for ever." Then: "The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace." You may answer: "Thanks be to God." If he skips these, or begins the absolution while you are still praying, keep going.

STEP 6

Act of Contrition and absolution

TRADITIONAL FORM (BALTIMORE CATECHISM)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

LATIN FORM, WITH TRANSLATION

LATIN

Deus meus, ex toto corde paenitet me omnium meorum peccatorum, eaque detestor, quia peccando, non solum poenas a te juste statutas promeritus sum, sed praesertim quia offendi te, summum bonum, ac dignum qui super omnia diligaris. Ideo firmiter propono, adjuvante gratia tua, de cetero me non peccatum peccandique occasiones proximas fugitum. Amen.

ENGLISH

My God, I am sorry with my whole heart for all my sins, and I detest them, because by sinning I have not only deserved the punishments justly set by Thee, but above all because I have offended Thee, the highest good, who art worthy to be loved above all things. Therefore I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to flee the near occasions of sin. Amen.

ALTERNATIVE FORM (RITE OF PENANCE, ICEL 1974)

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. Amen.

THE ABSOLUTION IN THE CURRENT RITE

The priest extends his hand over you and says this prayer (Order of Penance, English translation in use in the United States since 2023; the Latin is that of the *Ordo Paenitentiae*, quoted at CCC 1449). Answer “Amen.” The two Roman forms given here share the words of absolution; other Catholic rites use their own approved forms (CCC 1481).

LATIN	ENGLISH
Deus, Pater misericordiarum, qui per mortem et resurrectionem Filii sui mundum sibi reconciliavit et Spiritum Sanctum effudit in remissionem peccatorum, per ministerium Ecclesiae indulgentiam tibi tribuat et pacem. Et ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.	God, the Father of mercies, through the Death and Resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

RESPONSES IN THE CURRENT RITE

Priest	Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.
You	For his mercy endures for ever.
Priest	The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace.
You	Thanks be to God.

The answer “Thanks be to God” to the dismissal is customary, not prescribed. Before 2023 the English words were “His mercy endures for ever” and “The Lord has freed you from your sins”; either may still be heard, and the rite is the same.

THE ABSOLUTION IN THE TRADITIONAL RITE (RITUALE ROMANUM)

In the traditional rite the priest says these prayers while you make your Act of Contrition. The word in parentheses is said only for a cleric.

LATIN	ENGLISH
Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis tuis, perducat te ad vitam aeternam. Amen.	May almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen.
Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum tuorum tribuat tibi omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen.	May the almighty and merciful Lord grant thee pardon, absolution, and remission of thy sins. Amen.
Dominus noster Jesus Christus te absolvat; et ego auctoritate ipsius te absolvo ab omni vinculo excommunicationis (suspensionis) et interdicti, in quantum possum et tu indiges. Deinde ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.	May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and by His authority I absolve thee from every bond of excommunication (suspension) and interdict, so far as I am able and thou hast need. Then I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi, merita beatae Mariae Virginis et omnium Sanctorum, quidquid boni feceris et mali sustinueris, sint tibi in remissionem peccatorum, augmentum gratiae et praemium vitae aeternae. Amen.	May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good thou shalt do and whatever evil thou shalt endure, be to thee for the remission of sins, the increase of grace, and the reward of everlasting life. Amen.

The priest may shorten the rite for a good reason. The Council of Trent places the form of the sacrament in the words “I absolve thee” (Session XIV, chapter 3); the essential words are *Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*. In the modern rite the formula differs but ends in the same words, and the penitent answers Amen.

STEP 7

After confession

- Do the penance before leaving the church if you can, kneeling in a pew. Absolution does not wait on it, but it still binds (can. 981).
- If restitution, correction, or another act of justice is owed, make a concrete plan to carry it out.
- A mortal sin you remember afterward was forgiven with the others. Confess it at your next confession.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Psalm 102 (Douay), the traditional psalm of thanksgiving after confession

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and let all that is within me bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all he hath done for thee.
Who forgiveth all thy iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases.
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

OR, MORE BRIEFLY

My God, I thank You for Your mercy and forgiveness. Strengthen me to keep my resolutions, avoid near occasions of sin, repair the harm I have caused, and begin again in Your grace. Amen.

FOR PEACE OF CONSCIENCE

Notes for a peaceful and complete confession

- Do not deliberately conceal a mortal sin.
- Do not guess at exact numbers when you genuinely do not know them; give an honest approximation.
- Do not confuse temptation with consent.
- Do not repeat already absolved sins merely because you cannot feel forgiven.
- If you struggle with scrupulosity, follow one regular confessor's guidance rather than repeatedly reexamining doubtful matters.
- If you are uncertain about culpability, describe the act and the relevant facts simply, and let the priest judge.
- The seal of confession is absolute. The priest can never reveal what you confess, to anyone, for any reason, nor use it against you (cann. 983, 984); a confessor who directly broke the seal would be excommunicated automatically, the penalty reserved to the Apostolic See; an indirect violation is punished according to its gravity (can. 1386 §1).
- You may confess behind a screen or face to face. The Church guarantees a confessional with a screen to anyone who prefers it (can. 964 §2).
- You do not need to finish every page before going to confession, and when you confess real sins with sorrow you need not add a past sin to make the confession count. If you have only doubts or imperfections to confess, tell the priest and let him help; do not turn it into another examination.
- If you cannot confess comfortably in the priest's language, ask for a priest who speaks yours, or confess through an interpreter (can. 990); the interpreter is bound by the seal as the priest is (can. 983 §2).
- If you fill in the worksheet on a device, clear the fields or delete the copy afterward, and think of shared devices and cloud backups before entering anything. Names are never needed.

No finite list can name every sin or every circumstance. The essential task is a diligent, honest examination according to God's commandments, the duties of one's state in life, and what one knowingly and freely chose.

My confession

Write only what helps. Names and graphic detail are unnecessary; an item number from the checklist will do. List grave matter first, in the order you will say it. Destroy the paper after confession.

My last confession was about ago.

GRAVE MATTER: KIND OF SIN OR ITEM NUMBER	NUMBER OR FREQUENCY	CIRCUMSTANCE THAT CHANGES THE KIND

OTHER SINS I WANT TO CONFESS	NUMBER OR FREQUENCY

Restitution or repair to arrange

A question for the priest

Penance given

One practical resolution

Sources

Tiers follow the Catechism, canon law, and magisterial documents where they speak. Elsewhere they follow the common teaching of the pre-conciliar manuals, marked in the notes; those thresholds guide conscience but are not law, and a confessor may draw them differently.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition (1997).
- Code of Canon Law (1983), with Book VI as revised by *Pascite gregem Dei* (2021).
- Council of Trent, Session XIV (1551), doctrine and canons on the sacrament of penance.
- St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II q.73 a.3; II-II q.14 a.2, q.34 a.2, q.150 a.2, q.154 a.4.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), *Persona Humana* (1975), nn. 9, 10.
- CDF, Declaration on Masonic Associations (1983); Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, note of 13 November 2023.
- Paul VI, *Paenitemini* (1966); *Humanae Vitae* (1968), nn. 10, 11, 13 to 16.
- CDF, *Donum Vitae* (1987); *Dignitas Personae* (2008).
- Francis, *Misericordia et misera* (2016), n. 12.
- *Rituale Romanum*, rite of the sacrament of penance.
- Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (1930). Pius XII, Address to Midwives (29 October 1951), quoted in CCC 2362.
- Holy Office, decree of 2 August 1929; *monitum on amplexus reservatus*, 30 June 1952.
- John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), n. 84; *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), n. 13. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), n. 305 and note 351.
- Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum for Confessors concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life* (12 February 1997).
- Alexander VII, condemned propositions (1666), DS 2060. USCCB, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, seventh edition (2025), n. 36.
- Roman Catechism (Catechism of the Council of Trent), on matrimony. Baltimore Catechism No. 3 (1949 revision).
- St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Theologia Moralis*, on the use of marriage. H. Jone, *Moral Theology*. G. Grisez, *Living a Christian Life* (1993). Catholic Encyclopedia (1912), article *Sacrilege*.
- J. A. McHugh and C. J. Callan, *Moral Theology* (1929), n. 2583. T. Slater, *A Manual of Moral Theology*, vol. 1 (on the Sunday obligation and servile work).
- Response of 6 April 1853 (DS 2795). Sacred Penitentiary, response of 3 April 1916 (DS 3634). Innocent XI, decree of 2 March 1679, proposition 38 (DS 2138).
- Leo XIV, message for the tenth anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2026. DDF, reply to Cardinal Duka, 25 September 2023. CDF, note of 21 December 2010.
- US FDA, Plan B One-Step labeling revision, 23 December 2022. National Catholic Bioethics Center, on the Plan B label change.
- Fr. W. Bertrams, S.J., *L'Osservatore Romano*, 20 February 1966, on *Paenitemini* (reported in Canon Law Digest, vol. 6).
- Manuals: Prümmer, *Handbook of Moral Theology*; Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology*.
- Catholic Encyclopedia (1912), article *Theft*.
- Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña, *Calendario Litúrgico-Pastoral para la Provincia Eclesiástica de Puerto Rico*, 2013 and 2024 editions, norms on fast and abstinence (*Normas Complementarias*, arts. 23, 24) and days of obligation.
- *Ordo Paenitentiae* (1973), formula of absolution, quoted at CCC 1449. Order of Penance, English translation (ICEL 2019) for the dioceses of the United States, in use since 2023: absolution formula, invitation, and dismissal (Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions guide; USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, Newsletter, April 2022). *Ritual de la Penitencia*, Spanish absolution formula, as quoted in the Spanish text of *Misericordia et misera* (2016).
- USCCB, complementary norm on holy days of obligation (decree of 1991, confirmed 1992) and Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence (1966); USCCB Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States, 2026. Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, letter of 23 January 2025 on transferred holy days of obligation.
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (1993), nn. 108, 118.
- McHugh, J. A., and Callan, C. J., *Moral Theology: A Complete Course*, vol. II (1930), nn. 2171, 2249 to 2250, 2286, 2295, 2505 to 2508, 2515, 2518, 2534, 2536, 2538, 2583, 2614 to 2619, 2711; read in the 1930 edition, whose numbering the 1958 revised edition keeps.

- Sacred Congregation of the Council, response of 24 February 1967 on the substantial observance of penitential days, AAS 59 (1967) 229.
- CDF, Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1 October 1986), n. 3. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Antiqua et Nova* (28 January 2025), nn. 87, 90 to 93.
- St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.154 aa. 4, 5, 11, 12 (lust, touches, nocturnal pollution, the vice against nature).
- Alphonsus de Liguori, *Theologia Moralis*, ed. L. Gaudé, vol. IV (Rome, 1912), bk. VI, nn. 916, 919, as cited by a second reviewer; the edition was not checked here.

VERIFICATION

Sources for the older manual teaching and disputed points

The points below rest on the pre-conciliar manuals, on recent moralists, or on documents short of a definitive ruling. Each is listed with the source consulted. Where only a secondary source was available, the entry says so.

Theft: relative and absolute grave matter	Prümmer, <i>Handbook of Moral Theology</i> (English translation, 1956), n. 263; Catholic Encyclopedia (1912), Theft, by J. F. Delany, for the day's wage and the absolute sum. Davis, <i>Moral and Pastoral Theology</i> , 3rd ed., vol. II, pp. 302 to 303, cited in Prümmer's notes to n. 263 for the English monetary thresholds; Davis not checked directly.
Petty thefts	Prümmer, n. 264: half again from one owner, twice from several, as the common teaching of theologians. Innocent XI, decree of 2 March 1679, proposition 38 (DS 2138).
Sunday Mass: how much may be missed	McHugh and Callan, <i>Moral Theology</i> , vol. II, n. 2583(a), read in the 1930 edition: a notable part by dignity or by duration, about a third; arrival at the Offertory or departure after the Communion venial.
Servile work	McHugh and Callan, <i>Moral Theology</i> , vol. II, n. 2583(b): two and a half hours of very exhausting work, three hours of less arduous labor. The Angelus (November 2022) and the Fatima Center (2022), quoting Jone, agree in substance.
Paenitemini and a single lapse	Paenitemini, norm II §2 (AAS 58 [1966] 183). Sacred Congregation of the Council, response of 24 February 1967, AAS 59 (1967) 229, reported in Canon Law Digest, vol. 6: one sins gravely who without excusing cause omits a notable part, quantitative or qualitative, of the observance prescribed as a whole.
No lightness of matter; the kiss sought for carnal pleasure	Persona Humana 9, 10; Alexander VII, proposition 40, 18 March 1666 (DS 2060); Baltimore Catechism No. 3 (1949), definition of impurity, checked through a reprinted quotation; ST II-II q.154 a.4.
The husband's climax outside intercourse	Response of 6 April 1853 (DS 2795; the issuing dicastery is not verified here); Sacred Penitentiary, 3 April 1916 (DS 3634); Casti Connubii 54 to 56; Humanae Vitae 14; Persona Humana 9; CCC 2352, 2370.
Anal intercourse	Sacred Penitentiary, 1916 (DS 3634). As a prelude: St. Alphonsus, <i>Theologia Moralis</i> , bk. VI, n. 916 (mortal, the more common and truer opinion); Jone, <i>Moral Theology</i> , n. 757 (not grave without sodomitic intention), as quoted in Lawler, Boyle, and May, <i>Catholic Sexual Ethics</i> .
The wife's climax	St. Alphonsus, bk. VI, n. 919 (completion afterward, according to most authors); Catholic Answers, <i>What Is Allowed within the Marriage Act</i> ; G. Grisez, <i>Living a Christian Life</i> (1993), ch. 9, q. E (acts continuous with a complete act).
Oral stimulation as foreplay	No magisterial ruling. Grisez, <i>Living a Christian Life</i> (1993), ch. 9, q. E, permits it in continuity with a complete act; C. West, <i>Good News About Sex and Marriage</i> , the same (not checked here); the range of older opinion is reported in secondary surveys.
Reserved embrace	Holy Office, monitum of 30 June 1952, AAS 44 (1952) 546; English in <i>Homiletic and Pastoral Review</i> , December 1954.
Sexual acts in a sacred place	Catholic Encyclopedia (1912), Sacrilege, on local sacrilege.

Semen collection	Holy Office, decree of 2 August 1929; Donum Vitae II.B.6. For collection devices: E. C. Brugger, National Catholic Register, 13 July 2018 (article not checked here); disputed by others.
Marital debt	1 Cor 7:3 to 5; McHugh and Callan, Moral Theology, vol. II, nn. 2614 to 2617 (grave obligation, light matter, excusing causes); Humanae Vitae 13; can. 1135.
Periodic abstinence without serious reasons	Humanae Vitae 10, 16; Pius XII, Address to Midwives, 29 October 1951, AAS 43 (1951) 835 ff., the passage at 845 to 846. The Vademecum's footnote date of 2 October 1951 is an error; CCC 2362 gives 29 October.
Cooperation with a contracepting spouse	Casti Connubii 59; Vademecum for Confessors (1997), 3.13, 3.14; Holy See, 1853 (DS 2795); Sacred Penitentiary, 1916 (DS 3634).
Condoms against infection	Holy See, 1853 (DS 2795); CDF, note of 21 December 2010.
Divorced and civilly remarried	Familiaris Consortio 84; CCC 1650; Sacramentum Caritatis 29; Francis, letter to the Buenos Aires bishops, AAS 108 (2016) 1071 to 1074; DDF, reply to Cardinal Duka, 25 September 2023; Leo XIV, message of 19 March 2026.
Emergency contraception and IUDs	US FDA, Plan B One-Step labeling revision, 23 December 2022; National Catholic Bioethics Center, on the label change; Evangelium Vitae 13; Vademecum for Confessors 2.5; USCCB, Ethical and Religious Directives, n. 36 (seventh edition, 2025).
Continence before Communion	Roman Catechism, Part II, The Sacrament of Matrimony, closing instruction on the use of marriage: continence before Communion, at least three days. Checked through two secondary sources: D. G. Van Slyke, Abstinence from Conjugal Relations Before Reception of the Body of Christ (Project MUSE), and Fr. J. Zuhlsdorf, Ask Father (2019).
The priest's blessing before confession	Customary; printed in traditional hand missals rather than in the Rituale's rubrics.
Puerto Rico	Fast and abstinence: Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña, Calendario Litúrgico-Pastoral para la Provincia Eclesiástica de Puerto Rico, 2013 edition (copy on silo.tips) and 2024 edition (copy on Scribd), both printing the complementary norms, arts. 23 and 24, with abstinence from 14 and fasting from 18 until the fifty-ninth birthday. Holy days of obligation: two parish pages in Puerto Rico, one in the Archdiocese of San Juan and Parroquia Cristo Redentor, list January 1, January 6, and December 25; the 2013 calendar marks January 1 with its sign for days of obligation and leaves August 15 without it; the province's calendars on GCatholic show the Ascension and Corpus Christi on Sunday and the Epiphany on January 6. The conference's decree under can. 1246 §2 was not located. Easter duty: the 2013 calendar reminds pastors of the precept in Easter time and mentions no extension. Checked 2 October 2026; confirm with your pastor. The Easter-duty period rests on can. 920, not on the calendar.
Jone, Moral Theology, n. 757	Quoted through Lawler, Boyle, and May, Catholic Sexual Ethics; the original passage was not checked.
Slater, A Manual of Moral Theology, vol. 1	Quoted through secondary sources for the Sunday rules; the edition and pages were not checked here. McHugh and Callan, n. 2583, was read directly and says the same.
Baltimore Catechism No. 3 (1949), definition of impurity	Checked through a reprinted quotation; the exact edition and question number were not located.
References marked Cf.	The cited text states the principle; the item applies it to a particular case the text does not name. A citation without Cf. states the act or duty itself. McHugh and Callan was read in the 1930 edition; the 1958 revised edition keeps the section numbers.