

WHAT IS A PARISH MISSION?

Why are we having a Parish Mission? It is customary for every parish to invite a missionary priest to preach a Mission once every three years. *The special goal of the Mission is threefold: (1) to help fallen away Catholics return to their faith, (2) to convert tepid souls to fervor, and (3) to encourage pious souls in their good resolutions to serve God.* Just as Jesus and His Apostles went from town to town preaching the Kingdom of God, so the missionary comes to your parish to encourage you to give up sin and to practice your Catholic faith better.

What is a Parish Mission? A Parish Mission is one of the extraordinary apostolates of the Catholic Church. It is a series of sermons concerning salvation and the means of persevering in God's grace and friendship. *The sermons work together as a whole, so it is important to attend them all in order to derive the most profit from the Mission.* The Mission will enlighten your mind with God's Truth, help to detach your heart from sin, and strengthen your will with the love of God.

What do the Mission sermons discuss? Hard truths are discussed: sin, the reality of hell, the importance of sacramental confession. But more consoling truths are also talked about: how to persevere in God's grace and grow in His love; the importance of prayer, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and especially love for Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.

Who can attend the Mission? Anyone can come – Catholic or non-Catholic are all welcome. The Mission is especially helpful for anyone who is unable to attend an enclosed retreat in a religious house. However, scrupulous persons should attend the Mission only if they receive permission from their parish priest or confessor.

Can children attend the Mission? Parents should bring their teenagers to the Mission; younger children may come at the discretion of their parents. Many parishes provide a babysitter in the parish hall so that parents can be less distracted during the sermons.

What is a General Confession? During the Mission, everyone is encouraged to make a "General Confession" – that is, a confession of your whole life, as a means of preparing you to come closer to God.

For someone who has been making bad confessions or sacrilegious Communions, a General Confession is the only way to return to the state of God's grace and friendship. It clears the slate so you can start over fresh with God. And for pious Catholics, even though you have confessed your sins before, a General Confession is a good way to renew your contrition and hatred for sin, and to come closer to your loving Savior through the sacrament of Penance.

Who is the missionary priest? He is a Redemptorist Father whose special apostolate is to preach Parish Missions. He comes as an "extraordinary confessor" – that is, he will be unknown to you, so you can make your General Confession to him without feeling embarrassed.

Who are the Redemptorist Fathers? The Redemptorists were founded in 1732 by St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Doctor of the Church and patron saint of all confessors. The goal of the Redemptorists is to preach Parish Missions to the most abandoned souls – those destitute of spiritual aid.

Are there any indulgences attached to the Mission? Yes. According to the old laws governing indulgences, anyone who attends at least four of the Mission sermons can gain a plenary indulgence. Sick parishioners who are unable to attend may gain a plenary indulgence by praying each day for the success of the Mission. And on the last day of the Mission, rosaries and crucifixes will be blessed with special indulgences, so remember to bring these items with you to be blessed.

Can we record the Mission sermons? Yes. Although it's best to listen to them live, recordings can be helpful to remind you of the graces you received during the Mission. Also, sick parishioners unable to attend the Mission can profit by listening to recordings made for them.

How can we prepare for our Parish Mission? Firstly, pray for the success of the Mission. Then, encourage others (friends, family, neighbors) to attend. Finally, ask God for a true sorrow for sin and a real desire to change your life from sin or tepidity. In this way, you will be preparing yourself and your parish for the extraordinary grace of the Parish Mission.

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EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR ADULTS

O loving and merciful God, help me to make a good confession. Let me know my sins, so that I may tell them to the priest honestly and clearly. Help me to resolve sincerely not to commit these sins again. Amen.

* * * When confessing, be sure to specify each **kind** (species) of sin, the **number** of times committed, and any **circumstances** that change its nature. * * *

Preliminary

1. Have I been making bad confessions? – By purposely holding back any mortal sin, trying to deceive the confessor? – By not avoiding the proximate occasion of mortal sin: any person, place or thing that I know leads me into sin? **2.** If so, how long has this been going on? – How many bad confessions? – How many sacrilegious Communion in this state? – Other sacraments received in mortal sin: confirmation, marriage, extreme unction? **3.** Have I ever neglected to perform the penance given me in confession? **4.** When was my last good confession?

First Commandment

1. Does God have first place in my life? – Do I try to conform my will to His, or His will to mine? **2.** Have I denied, refused to accept any teaching of the Catholic Church? – Talked against the Catholic Church? – Made any effort to clear up doubts about the Catholic Church or its teachings? **3.** Taken active part in non-Catholic services? – Believed all religions are equal? – Associated with persons dangerous to my faith? – Exposed my faith to danger by reading dangerous non-Catholic books? – Listened to non-Catholic preachers? – Been ashamed of my faith? **4.** Practiced superstition, believed in fortunetellers, horoscope, spiritism? **5.** Neglected prayer for a long time? Presumed on God's mercy? Despaired? **6.** Desecrated church or cemetery?

Second Commandment

1. Blasphemy: spoken angrily or insultingly about, or toward God? **2.** Cursed another: called down evil on a person? **3.** Perjury: knowingly taken an oath to a lie? **4.** Profanity: used God's name irreverently? **5.** Broken any lawful vow or oath? Broken promises?

Third Commandment

1. Missed Mass on Sunday or Holyday without a serious reason? – Caused others to miss Mass (for example, the children)? – Come late to Mass, left early? **2.** Neglected to fast before receiving Holy Communion? **3.** Received Communion in the hand? **4.** Done unnecessary servile work on Sunday or Holyday? Shopped on Sunday?

Fourth Commandment

Children toward Parents: **1.** Disobedient or disrespectful to parents? – Totally rejected or despised authority of parents? – Caused them grief, distress? – Neglected them? – Ingratitude? **2.** Secretly gone on dates? – Done anything in a sneaking way? **3.** Ashamed of parents, family? – Talked against them? – Made fun of them, or of anyone else in authority? Parents toward Children: **1.** Given children bad example, e.g., by staying away from sacraments for a long time, missing Mass? **2.** Neglected children's baptism, confirmation? – Neglected their Catholic education or Catholic way of life (prayer, sacraments)? **3.** Failed to explain facts of life fitting to their age? **4.** Failed to correct faults: lying, stealing, disobedience, dangerous reading, videos, or internet? **5.** Failed to watch companionship...allowed dating while still in school? – Failed to know who they were going with, where they were going? **6.** Interfered with their vocation in life? **7.** Observed double moral standard: one for self, one for children? **8.** Failed to support family? – Misused family funds? Other: **9.** Refused to pray for Pope? **10.** Joined seditious or communist association, or secret society? – Disturbed public peace?

Fifth Commandment.

1. Suggested or deliberately caused abortion? (Excommunication if procured.) – Suggested, allowed, co-operated in sterilization? **2.** In-vitro fertilization? **3.** Supported euthanasia? **4.** Drunkenness? – Used narcotics or drugs? **5.** Led another person into any sin, or tried to? **6.** Not avoided occasions of sin? – Neglected to put internet blocker on computer or handheld device? **7.** Become angry to the point of serious harm, hurt, or causing miserable home conditions? **8.** Done bodily harm to anyone? Attempted suicide? Neglected health? **9.** Really hated anyone (wishing evil)? **10.** Planned revenge?

Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

1. Deliberately brought impure thoughts or desires to mind? – Purposely kept those that came spontaneously? **2.** Taken part in dirty talk? – Told dirty jokes? – Boasted of sins? **3.** Endangered chastity by reading, pictures, movies, internet, immoral companions, immodest dancing or music? **4.** Passionate kissing, petting (outside marriage)? **5.** Impure act alone? – Impure touches with others? – Cohabitation? **6.** Immodest dress? **7.** Used contraceptive technique (onanism) or device? **8.** Unnatural acts? – Incest? **9.** Unjustly refused marriage debt? – Used rhythm method without sufficient reason? **10.** Adultery (single/double)? **11.** Caused others to do any of these things? **12.** In doubt about God's law, did I ask confessor about it? **13.** As a divorced or separated person, do I date?

Seventh and Tenth Commandments.

(Estimate value of stolen goods, or amount of damage caused:) **1.** Have I stolen or accepted stolen goods? – Stolen from a church? **2.** Cheated or defrauded anyone? – Stolen from work? Wasted time at work or on internet? **3.** Damaged or destroyed others' property? **4.** Failed to pay just debts? **5.** Not made restitution for any of these sins (that is, paid back rightful owner)? When do I intend to do so? **6.** Am I envious or jealous of what others have? Rejoicing in evil happening to others?

Eighth Commandment.

1. Have I told lies? **2.** Forged documents? **3.** Damaged or destroyed another's reputation by gossip, slander, calumny, rash judgment and loose talk, or by revealing secret faults or sins (detraction)? **4.** Retained false suspicions? – Insinuated these suspicions? **5.** Did I try to repair damage done in this way? **6.** Revealed secrets?

Laws of the Church

1. Eaten meat on Friday knowingly? – Failed to fast on days appointed? (One full meal; two smaller meals; nothing between meals, except liquids.) **2.** Let a whole year go by without confession? **3.** Failed to receive Communion during Easter season? **4.** Neglected financial and moral support of the Catholic Church? **5.** Criticized or violated laws of the Catholic Church protecting sanctity of marriage? – Shown approval to or cooperated with a Catholic marrying outside the Catholic Church? – Have I divorced and remarried?

HOW TO LINE UP FOR CONFESSION

1. "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I am married...single...divorced...widowed."
2. "My last good confession was..." (tell when)
3. Tell all mortal sins: kind, number (as best as you can), any circumstances that add to or take away from guilt.
4. Then: "I am sorry for all these sins, and for all the sins of my past life, especially..." (mention some serious sin of the past)

ACT OF CONTRITION.

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. ✠

PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE PARISH MISSION

(#633 in the Raccolta)

O Jesus, most holy Redeemer, our Master and our King, it is to Thy Sacred Heart, that ocean of love and goodness, that we owe the inestimable blessing of a Mission. Touched with compassion at the sight of our miseries and the eternal unhappiness that threatens us, Thou hast resolved to save us. The missionaries who are coming to us are Thy representatives; in Thy person they will break for us the bread of God's Word and will bring to us the joy of forgiveness. Grant, O Lord, that we may be faithful to Thy grace and correspond zealously with the advances of Thy mercy. Let the preaching of Thy eternal truths enlighten and quicken our minds, and deeply move our hearts, so that we may realize our shortcomings and sincerely repent of them. To the poor souls plunged in the darkness of ignorance and error do Thou grant the life of faith. To those who have saddened Thee by a wicked life, do Thou give the grace of a sincere conversion. Bestow fresh fervor upon the lukewarm, and upon the just true progress in the way of virtue. Send forth Thy Holy Spirit upon all of us, and the face of this parish shall be renewed. And thou, O Mary, immaculate Virgin and Mother of Perpetual Help, thou art the refuge and advocate of poor sinners; the more guilty they are, the more claim they have upon thy tenderness. It is for this reason that we make bold to implore thy powerful and motherly protection with all confidence. Our salvation is in Thy hands, plead our cause and intercede for us with thy divine Son. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Patroness of the parish of North Richland Hills, pray for us during the blessed days of this Mission. Amen.

An indulgence of 500 days in places where Missions have been publicly announced beforehand to the people, up to the beginning of the same. **(S.C. of the Holy Office. Feb. 27, 1913. S. P. Ap., May 17, 1935)**