

*“It is impossible for the soul to remain in the same state, but it must move along either to what is better or what is worse.” -Dorotheos of Gaza*

Dear Fellow Parishioners and Youth of the Parish,

*“[The] spiritual journey is...often interrupted because of our negligence and sin. We forget about God’s love and God’s gifts to us, we forget the promises made at Holy Baptism, and we return again to the slavery of sin. God, however, in his loving-kindness and knowing our weakness, gives us the opportunity to return and be near Him once again, to correct our course and heal our wounds. This return is made possible through the sacrament of repentance and confession.” -Arch. Nektarios Antonopoulos from the book “Return”*

As we look forward to the beginning of Lent and the journey we know God has prepared for us, we also look forward to using the specific tools He and His Church has to guide us on our journey. One of these tools, as we will read, is the Sacrament of Confession. This year St. Spyridon’s Orthodox Church will be beginning to teach on this special Sacrament for children. There will be two teaching “sessions”, one on March 9th after the all-youth sponsored potluck and one on Sunday, April 10th during Sunday School class time. Father Evan will be offering an entire day during the Saturday of Lazarus and All-Youth Palm Folding for the youth to come to Confession if they are so prepared.

We are well aware of the progression of our souls. From when we are just old enough to realize that we are lying to our parents or being selfish with our toys, we are aware, in probably the best and most simple way, of the condition of our souls. God and His Church offer us a path to Peace through Repentance. Not like a path and certainly not like a peace “that the world gives,” but only a Peace and Path that He can give. It is not as simple as thinking with our intellect that we would like to move our soul into a “better state.” And it is not as simple as going to Church, walking up and venerating an icon, and even receiving the Eucharist. It is, indeed, all of that doing and thinking and receiving, but it is also so much more. The Orthodox Church offers the fullness of the Body of Christ, preserved in all of her Sacraments (Mysteries), in Her Tradition and traditions, Saints and saints; and we are blessed with the opportunity to participate with our whole selves: to move, by God’s grace, toward what is better, with our minds, bodies, and souls.

This is where the Sacrament of Confession and our participation in it is so key to the Church. We are distracted, we are bombarded and tricked daily into sin. It is the nature of the world we live in. But with Confession we have the opportunity to repent, to say aloud our trespasses and be guided by God.

On this journey to Pascha, as we travel together, we pray that you and your children will allow God’s guidance and grace to penetrate your minds, bodies, and souls. That you will return to Him specifically through the Sacrament of Confession.

On the following pages are prayers and lists of sins specific to age groups of children and adults, beginning at about age six. The Church recognizes that at about age six children are aware of the things that they do wrong, aware of it when they lie or are mean-spirited toward another, etc. It is obviously first up to the parent as to when to begin talking to their children about confession, and second up to the child if they feel comfortable participating in the Sacrament. Please take the time to pray and if possible prepare you and your children to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. Use the following guides for making your own lists and preparing accordingly, and bring your guide with you when you come.

Good Strength in Christ,

*Emily H. Lum*

Emily Lum (Youth Worker)

*+Father Evan*

+Father Evan

**Ages 6-9**  
List of Potential Sins



     Being angry with a sibling



     Being angry with Mom or Dad



     Not paying attention in Church

     Saying mean words to him or her

     Not listening to Mom or Dad

     Forgetting to pray

     Not sharing toys or space

     Saying mean things to them

     Lying to someone

     Wanting what someone else has

     Wanting to be the only one Mom or Dad pay attention to

     Not letting God have control in life

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Prayers Before Confession

I CONFESS to God all my countless sins which I have committed till the present day and hour: in thought, word, and deed. Every day and every hour I sin by not being thankful to God for His many blessings to me.

I have sinned with my words, how I think of others, anger, pride, unkindness, inattention, paying back meanness with meanness, not listening, grumbling, blaming, self-will, lying, love only of myself, and attachment to things,

I have sinned through dozing and whispering in church, inattention during prayer in church and in private, not praying myself. I have sinned in thought, word and deed and by sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, and by my other spiritual and bodily senses. But I repent of these sins and ask forgiveness.

I also repent and ask forgiveness for everything which I have not confessed through ignorance or forgetfulness.

In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Lord hear my prayers. Please prepare my heart to confess the things I have done wrong, and all my sins to you. Please grant me humility and the desire to change. Amen.

**Ages 10-13**  
List of Potential Sins

- |                                                                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of a living relationship with God                   | OTHER:_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not caring about prayer, fasting, or going to Church     | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetting to pray or fast                               | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not going to church                                      | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not reading the Bible                                    | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of love for my friends, my siblings, my parents     | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking badly of another person                         | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting with others                                     | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being stubborn or angry with parents                     | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being jealous of what other people have                  | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying, being insincere                                   | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not being thankful                                       | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judging others                                           | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking that I am the best                              | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying about what others think of me, what I look like | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not respecting my parents                                | _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not being gentle and open to those around me             | _____       |

Prayers Before Confession

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Shepherd and Lamb, You offered Your life on the cross to take away the sins of the world. You granted forgiveness to Peter and to the harlot who turned to You in tears. Lord, receive me, a sinner, and hear my prayer of repentance. I acknowledge my sins and transgressions, on purpose or on accident, known and unknown. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to turn away from my sins and to change my life according to Your teachings. Help me to walk in the way of the righteous and to offer praise to Your glorious name forever. Amen.

Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

Lord, deprive me not of Your heavenly and eternal blessings. Lord, if I have sinned in word or deed, in mind or spirit, forgive me. Lord, deliver me from all distress, ignorance, forgetfulness, laziness and stony hardness of heart. Lord, deliver me from all temptations and spiritual abandonment. Lord, enlighten my heart which has been darkened by evil desire. Lord, take heed of the weakness of my soul, and help me with Your grace, that Your Holy Name may be glorified in me. Lord Jesus Christ, inscribe the name of Your servant in the book of life, granting me a blessed end. Lord my God, I have done nothing good; yet by Your compassion help me to make a new beginning. Lord, refresh my heart with the dew of your grace. Lord, receive me in repentance and do not forsake me. Lord, enable me to love You with all my soul, my mind and heard; and my neighbor as myself. Lord, as you command; Lord, as You know all things; Lord as You desire in Your goodness; let Your will be done in me. Lord, let Your will, not mine, be done, through the intercessions of the all-holy Theotokos and of all the Saints, for You are Blessed forever. Amen.

**Ages 14-18**  
List of Potential Sins

- |                                                       |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ___Ignorance of Sin                                   | ___Lying                            |
| ___Forgetfulness                                      | ___Wanting things that others have  |
| ___Judgement of others                                | ___Always thinking I am right       |
| ___Gossip                                             | ___Not loving my neighbor           |
| ___Worrying about what others think, what I look like | ___Not being thankful               |
| ___Anger with friends, parents, siblings              | ___Thinking only of myself          |
| ___Thinking myself better than others                 | ___Drinking or using drugs          |
| ___Lacking in a living relationship with God          | ___Wanting to be noticed            |
| ___Forgetting to read my Bible                        | ___Jealousy of someone              |
| ___Forgetting to pray                                 | ___Lust towards another             |
| ___Laziness                                           | ___Distraction at Church, in prayer |
| ___Wanting to eat well during the fast                | ___Lack of belief or faith in God   |
| ___Being quick to speak and slow to listen            | ___Arguing with my parents, etc.    |
| ___Getting defensive                                  | ___Not respecting authority         |
| ___Cheating in school                                 | ___Cursing                          |
| ___Stealing                                           | ___Not forgiving someone            |

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prayers Before Confession

Sweet Jesus, my Lord and Master, through Your holy passion You have healed my evil passions, and through Your sacred wounds You have cured my sinful wounds. Grant me, who have greatly sinned against You, tears of compunction. Purify my body with the fragrance of Your life-giving Body, and sweeten my soul with Your sacred Blood, casting out the bitterness with which the adversary has fed me. Lift up my earthbound mind to You and take me out of the pit of perdition. I have no sincere repentance, I have no true compunction, I have no consoling tears to lead me as a child of God to my spiritual inheritance. My mind has been darkened through worldly passions. I cannot look up to You in grieving remorse. I cannot warm myself with tears of love for You. But, Lord Jesus Christ, the treasury of blessings, grant me thorough repentance and a diligent heart to seek You. Grant me Your grace and renew in me the form of Your image. I have forsaken You; but, Lord, do not forsake me. Come out to seek me; lead me to Your pasture; number me among the sheep of Your chosen flock and nourish me with the food of Your sacred mysteries, through the intercessions of Your all-pure Mother and all the Saints. Amen.

O Lord my God, I confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word and deed. I have also omitted to do what Your holy law requires of me. But now with repentance and contrition I turn again to Your love and mercy. I entreat You to forgive me all my transgression and to cleanse me from all my sins. Lord, fill my heart with the light of Your truth. Strengthen my will by Your grace. Teach me both to desire and to do only what pleases You. Amen.