

# Merciful Like the Father

*Results of a  
2021 Survey  
on Priestly  
Best Practices  
in the Sacrament  
of Penance and  
Reconciliation.*





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## Introduction

As the Steering Committee for the Missionaries of Mercy in the USA were preparing were preparing for our National Gathering August 30 through September 2, 2021 at Saint Meinrad Seminary and Guest House, we wanted to have some sessions not just on the special faculties in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation we have received from Pope Francis, but also some feedback from the people we serve through confession, so that we might continuously better minister to their needs. There was the suggestion to have some lay people and religious speak to us of their experiences, but we thought that their suggestions might be too tied to their individual experiences. We decided, rather, to do a survey through social media and the internet, to get a much wider series of response.

The survey was carried out between May 12 and May 31, 2021. Missionaries of Mercy in the USA put the survey on their personal and parish FaceBook and Twitter feeds, parish websites and bulletins and other media. We also reached out to some priests who are social media influencers to try to make sure that the survey reached the broadest possible audience. We received 1499 responses, which forms the basis of this book. It was not a scientific survey of random Catholics; the responses all came from those who saw the postings on social media or elsewhere and took the time to respond. But what was generously shared is a very valuable resource of first person experiences in penitents' own words.

We asked six basic questions:

- Besides absolution, is there anything else you look for when you go to Confession?
- What have been your best experiences in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?
- Have you had any difficult experiences in Confession? What made them difficult?
- Do you choose a consistent confessor most of the time or do you go to whoever is hearing confessions? Is there a reason behind your choice?
- What qualities and virtues do you look for in a good confessor?
- If you were speaking to a group of priest confessors, what advice would you give them to help you to experience more profoundly God's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?

We hope that the results will be of benefit to Missionaries of Mercy in the USA and elsewhere, to every priest who hears confessions, to seminary faculties who prepare the next generation of confessors, to seminarians and those men who believe God is calling them to the ministerial priesthood and to anyone interested in a broader understanding of the practice of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation beyond their own personal experiences.

You will find listed in here best practices, worst practices, common practices (both effective and ineffective) and strange practices. The brutally honest responses from people will lead you

on occasion to thank God for the holiness of some priests who have helped multitudes experience the depth and beauty of God's merciful love. On other occasions, you will be shocked and moved to reparation for the hurt some priests in the confessional have caused. On balance, you will see some things that every priest privileged to hear confessions should take to his prayer and the whole Church should intercede priests act upon.

One clear take away is that the vast majority of penitents who have responded are asking that priests, despite their busy schedules and reduced numbers, make the Sacrament more available so that penitents are able to take advantage of the gift of Divine Mercy without feeling rushed or without having the opportunity for confessors to share some ways for them to grow in holiness and in the fight against sin. Some respondents think that priests' adding extra time for confession is an easy ask; most recognize that it's a challenging one. Nevertheless, you will hear expressed over and over again the need for more.

Another obvious request is for what hundreds have called "meaningful penances." It is somewhat shocking how many respondents complained at being given the same penance of a certain amount of Our Fathers and Hail Marys no matter what they have confessed. Regardless of the priest's intention to give penances people can do, with prayers that most will know, penitents routinely receive that penance as if the priest really isn't listening to what they have said and therefore that they really don't care. Many have asked for Scriptural penances, corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and other actions that respond medicinally to the spiritual illnesses they confessed.

As Pope Francis said to the Missionaries of Mercy gathered in Rome on April 10, 2018, "We truly must remember that God's mercy knows no bounds, and with your ministry you are tangible signs that the Church cannot, must not and does not want to create any barriers or difficulties that obstruct access to the Father's forgiveness. The 'prodigal son' did not have to pass through customs; he was welcomed by the Father, without obstacles. ... Those who are God's co-workers and administrators of mercy must be careful not to foil God's grace." Rather, as imitators of the Merciful Love of God, they "are called to support those who approach the confessional, to give them the strength to believe and hope."

The results have been lightly edited for grammar, spelling and readability. Responses from trolls attacking the Catholic practice of the Sacrament have been eliminated, as have simple replies of "yes" or "no" to the questions, which would be onerous to read continuously in a work like this. Many of the responses are similar, because they describe similar experiences, but they have been retained so that readers can assess how common are the practices to which they attest.

These responses will be digested in several presentations during the Missionaries of Mercy national gathering at St. Meinrad, but they are shared both so that Missionaries may prepare better for those presentations as well as so that many more than those present may profit.

Father Roger J. Landry, Editor  
Missionary of Mercy  
Memorial of Saint Monica, 2021

## **Besides absolution is there anything else you look for when you go to Confession?**

1. Compassion and a few kind words. Uplifting words, too, to give us hope.
2. Grace, especially the grace to do better and to pray.
3. Feel closer to the Lord, peace, closer to my parish priest.
4. Meaningful penance with reference to scripture.
5. Advice, encouragement, correction (typically gentle), a look at Jesus's mercy from which peace derives.
6. I like getting advice from the priest too. Asking his opinions about how to avoid sin and be a better person.
7. Compassion
8. A confessor who greets you with a smile and welcomes you to sit down and not be nervous.
9. A priest who makes me feel like I am encountering Christ rather than encountering a robot, even if I am his twentieth penitent.
10. Reconnection with the church, a chance to interact with my priest or a priest.
11. A chance for guidance.
12. Strength in my resolve to avoid sins, and the feeling of the outpouring of grace and God's mercy.
13. Personal words from the priest. Something that tells me he heard what I said.
14. Guidance.
15. Common sense, and an attitude from the priest that it's not an inquisition.
16. Guidance.
17. A deeper connection to God.
18. Permission to go to communion.
19. Engagement, guidance.
20. Someone who listens.
21. Compassionate listening, helpful advice.
22. A listening heart and ear.
23. Clarity and understanding of my actions.
24. Peace of heart, mind, soul. That extra boost of joy you get for obedience to God's will and hope in his faithful promises.
25. Any indication from the priest that he has listened to my confession, rather than a standard response that he gives to everyone.
26. Guidance.
27. Compassion, peace and renewal of heart
28. Advice from the priest to do better. Penance.
29. Empathy, helping me understand "the rules" better.
30. Discussion with the priest, guidance.
31. Comfort, healing, direction, encouragement.
32. Sometimes advice on a particular issue.
33. Forgiveness and peace.

34. When I go to Confession, besides absolution I also look for direct access to God.
35. Advice.
36. Direction, guidance.
37. A priest who offers guidance and suggestions related to my sins.
38. Consolation.
39. Sensible input and not just pious pap offered someone bored.
40. A priest who is understanding of human nature and compassionate.
41. A sounding board to think things through.
42. Compassion, community and connection. Not judgment.
43. Simply to be heard.
44. Peace.
45. Direction.
46. I really appreciate seeing the card that has the act of contrition on it. For some reason I can never fully recall it while I'm in the confessional.
47. That the priest would remark in such a way that shows evidence that he really listened to my confession.
48. To talk about the circumstances and what led to the sin, and how to try to avoid those situations in the future.
49. Someone who actually listens to struggles, a person who is neutral, wise, and reasonable.
50. Counsel and good advice.
51. A face to face encounter, not a tiny space that kills my knees. Actual time with a priest. Even ten minutes would be great.
52. A priest who is merciful!
53. Someone who has time to listen. A sound proof comfortable space.
54. A chance to connect, get guidance and reassurance.
55. To be heard and understood and to receive counsel that sheds light on my sins.
56. An open minded, friendly priest I can relate well with.
57. Advice, clarification and words of encouragement.
58. A conversation, especially with advice and examples of where I can be better.
59. An image of the Merciful Jesus.
60. The peaceful feeling of having gone to Confession
61. Comfort.
62. Anonymity (which is hard in a small town), non judgmental listening and understanding, time to listen instead of feeling rushed, more explanation of the purpose of reconciliation and what the sacrament does for us (which doesn't occur when we directly ask God for forgiveness).
63. While I am assured of Divine forgiveness in the Sacrament, the human connection with the priest truly matters. I can honestly say I would likely not be alive today were I not Confirmed as a third grader, directly after Vatican II, and had not met some beautiful confessors so early in my young and middle school years who modeled love and compassion. It matters to see the empathy, caring and compassion on a confessor's face. It matters to have the priest touch my head as he gives absolution; He is in persona Christi at this time, as very like Christ Himself is touching me. I cry nearly every time. I can't not see and feel the face of Christ when I meet a truly beautiful vulnerable priest in Confession. When I don't, I'm hurt, not just for myself

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but for the priest who seems "unpresent" and needs somehow to protect himself, and for the Body of Christ.

64. I expect some counseling too and best advice on how to avoid sin.
65. Openness and compassion.
66. Receiving special Graces
67. Deep insights and feedback, words of encouragement and affirmation that God still loves me.
68. Reflection.
69. I look for guidance regarding to what extent something is a sin.
70. Compassion and guidance
71. Spiritual relief and renewal
72. Empathy, understanding, space to be challenged
73. An experience of God's love and presence in my life through the loving and listening ear of the person I am confiding in.
74. I look for a priest who is going to talk to me, even if just for a minute about how I can avoid occasions of sin.
75. Some guidance from the priest on how to help avoid recommitting the sin.
76. Whatever the priest might say to provide wisdom or encouragement
77. An understanding of the human condition.
78. Grace or some sense of it to prepare me for the Holy Eucharist.
79. That the priest understands your situation. During my first confession I told the priest that I had stolen money from my mother's piggy bank. He told me to repay it. If I had money, I wouldn't have taken it out of her bank. I told her as an adult that I used to take that money and she always knew I had.
80. Counsel, understanding.
81. Good counsel.
82. An open heart, kind voice, patience
83. Sometimes guidance for something I am struggling with.
84. Unconditional love, comfort, understanding, guidance, unity.
85. Air conditioning.
86. Encouragement.
87. Good advice.
88. Advice and peace of mind.
89. A welcome from the priest.
90. Counseling based on sound psychology, not pious fervorinos.
91. Spiritual direction, albeit brief.
92. I look for someone who will listen, rather than boss me around.
93. Spiritual guidance either on how to forgive myself and accept God's mercy for me, or guidance on how to avoid the occasion of sin in the future.
94. Understanding, peace, help – not just a penance to say 10 Hail Marys and 5 Our Fathers. That really doesn't make me want to return to Confession.
95. Guidance in how to be a better person
96. I find it helpful when the Priest asks me questions if anything I say is not clear or if I seem to be using terms that are too soft. It's more accurate to say I lied instead of saying told a falsehood, or that I committed fornication instead of falling victim to my passions.

97. Advice, understanding and compassion.
98. Internal peace and graced blessings. Knowing I am forgiven. I wish we had a prayer to pray together.
99. Some very basic spiritual direction, whether something is a serious sin or more venial.
100. Encouragement.
101. A feeling of peace from God.
102. Very short exhortation and encouragement
103. Connection.
104. Consolation.
105. Grace, compassion.
106. Grace to help live more virtuous.
107. I appreciate when a priest gives a bit of counsel, if the sin confessed is a besetting one. Or encouragement in the penance to match the offense, through explaining why he has given a certain penance. And empathy.
108. Kindness.
109. Words of encouragement; maybe prayer suggestions.
110. Clarity, because some priests differ in what is a mortal sin.
111. When he is willing to talk over things troubling me.
112. To experience God's love and mercy. To help me forgive myself and start over.
113. Insight into my sinful habits.
114. Understanding.
115. Spiritual guidance.
116. To feel lovingly corrected, so I can grow and do better. And still loved.
117. Friendly, compassionate and inspiring guidance.
118. Encouragement, reassurance.
119. Clarity about repeat sins. Consolation.
120. A priest who makes me comfortable.
121. A priest willing to have a small discussion about avoiding the near occasion of sin, like small guideposts to help avoid them and to recognize the human trend toward repeating sin.
122. A priest who is experienced and wise. Ideally, someone who knows me and my circumstances well or who takes the time to try to know me. Someone who can speak hope into difficulties.
123. The feeling of relief.
124. Advice and guidance.
125. I like for the priest to talk over my sins. I like getting his opinion on what I could strive to do better.
126. Tenderness and a reminder that God truly loves me no matter what I do to hurt myself, him, or others. I have severe fears of abandonment if I make a mistake. When I go to Confession I go as an act of hope that I am not abandoning God and God is not abandoning me simply because I am not perfect.
127. To talk through my sins, the why's, etc. I also hope not to get chewed out, but rather to be encouraged to improve. To hear love, not scolding.
128. To build a bond with the clergy.
129. Admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

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130. Practical tips for spiritual and personal changes I can make to avoid sin.
131. A caring response. Mercy.
132. Some spiritual direction.
133. Spiritual direction from the priest regarding the sins I am struggling with.
134. Advice, understanding.
135. Good advice on how to amend my way against a grave sin; a non-judgmental tone
136. It is always much appreciated when the priest hears a specific sin that he can address with me the way of better understanding or advice.
137. Advice for spiritual growth.
138. An outpouring of God's grace into my life.
139. Words of counsel going forward to assist me in prayer.
140. Guidance.
141. Realism - acknowledgement of what I've said and receiving a "realistic" response.
142. Gentleness from the priest. I appreciate having my questions answered and I truly appreciate a little spiritual advice.
143. The grace to avoid sin and the near occasion of sin.
144. Understanding who I am as a Catholic lay woman. A priest open to listen to my concerns as well as my sins.
145. Guidance on how to address issues.
146. Words of comfort and guidance as to how to avoid serious sins. Sometimes I get it, sometimes not.
147. Spiritual direction.
148. Peace .
149. A chance for deeper discernment. Being able to say out loud to another person what separates me from God. But mostly the affirmation of absolution.
150. Guidance on ways to overcome sin, especially if it's a sin that requires frequent confessing
151. Comfort and reassurance.
152. Compassion, understanding, words that lead me deeper into the love of Jesus and how I can show that love
153. Kindness.
154. I am always so grateful when the priest makes a suggestion or offers a personal consolation or comment.
155. Support, acceptance, hope.
156. I have liked it when priest addressed one of my sins with compassion.
157. A private place to share.
158. An understanding and merciful priest.
159. I would like a little more interaction. Only one time in my life did the priest ask me questions and talk to me about my sins. I'm 67 now.
160. Someone who will listen and not rush through the sacrament.
161. Counseling on certain faith matters. The graces gained.
162. Hope.
163. Kind attention. Good listener. Confession prayers printed out in large print and posted.
164. Spiritual guidance.

165. I appreciate the perspectives of the priest giving absolution. Linking real life issues that lead to sin with biblical history is helpful.
166. The confessor's perspective in light of God's mercy
167. To be heard. Too often I get the impression that the priest is not really interested and simply wants to get me out the door.
168. Ways to amend my life.
169. The opportunity to look in the mirror and see what's there with absolute honesty.
170. A penance that will help me avoid sin in the future.
171. Counsel and clarity .
172. A compassionate person who genuinely listens to what I say and can mirror God's forgiveness to me. My own judgment and the fact that I've shown up is enough—I need someone else to tell me it's time to let those things go and move forward.
173. Comfort that I have received the mercy of God.
174. Guidance, comfort.
175. Gentle kindness and advice for avoiding sin in future.
176. Understanding and a sense of empathy.
177. Spiritual guidance.
178. Counsel.
179. God's forgiveness. Advice. Reassurance.
180. Compassion.
181. Feeling that I'm listened to and not judged.
182. A fresh start! An attempt to stop some of the sins I repeat.
183. The peace of being in a quiet place.
184. Counsel on things that are stumbling blocks.
185. Availability. A small window of confession on a Saturday does not service a family like mine with a group of teenagers and young adults.
186. Mercy, compassion, comfort
187. Patience, mercy, kindness.
188. Maybe compassion, if the situation allows for it.
189. Spiritual guidance. Interest in my situation. Compassion. Honesty. Fidelity to church teaching.
190. Understanding!
191. A confessor who is not just going through the motions, one who is thinking about what I have said and gives appropriate response.
192. Unbiased, nonjudgmental advice on how to strengthen my faith and grow closer to God.
193. A sense of consolation.
194. Wise counsel. The ability of the confessor to separate the wheat from the chaff in what I say and provide the best advice. To point out the difference between a stupid mistake and a sin. Compassion.
195. Self-reflection.
196. Sometimes answers to questions, sometimes just someone to listen and to pray with me
197. Positive connection with the priest. Friendliness and understanding.
198. Kindness.
199. Further questions and clarification from the priest.

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200. Sometimes advice on avoiding sin.
201. I'm really there for the absolution, but I appreciate good counsel from those who can offer it well.
202. More attention paid to the Sacrament by the priest.
203. Clear conscience, peace of mind.
204. Counseling from the priest
205. Peace
206. Wisdom on what separates us from God and leads to sin. Clarity on sin versus scrupulosity.
207. A good listener.
208. Advice.
209. Compassion.
210. Direction! Meaningful comments and maybe even a question to push me toward some insight.
211. Conversion.
212. A priest who truly listens and offers real life tips relevant to my confession. My pastor once had me write a note to a relative I was angry with. Such a good thing to do! Another priest from Africa asked me to memorize a prayer that I pray frequently now.
213. Guidance. Being able to know that I am in the right path.
214. Compassion.
215. Peace and clarity.
216. Spiritual direction, advice on saints to read to help with amendment.
217. Perhaps some guidance about how to avoid similar sin in the future.
218. Guidance on living a less sin-filled life.
219. Advice on best ways to avoid temptations of sin.
220. Guidance.
221. A kind priest.
222. Counsel (sometimes).
223. Emotional support, encouragement, advice, hope.
224. Mercy and compassion.
225. Sometimes kind advice on how to better avoid those things I'm confessing.
226. I like it when I receive some spiritual guidance.
227. I'm looking to get "unstuck." Also looking for fresh perspectives and insights that I would not have come to on my own or through my reading.
228. I look for direction. I hope the priest sees something in me I can't see, whether positive or negative. I hope the priest has a handle on life experiences and can identify with my failings.
229. A kind-hearted priest, and life advice.
230. Empathy; someone who doesn't make me feel like I'm being judged.
231. Relief from my guilt.
232. Graces to stop or change behaviors.
233. Advice from the priest about my sins.
234. Occasional quick question on whether something is a sin.
235. Spiritual guidance.
236. Hopefully a priest who will converse with me
237. Occasionally, advice.

238. Sometimes I look to get good guidance from the priest on how to avoid sin or despair over sin.
239. Encouragement to do better but also affirmation that my sin has not put me outside God's love even if I fail again.
240. Compassion, understanding, guidance.
241. Sometimes a few words of encouragement or advice can be helpful.
242. Peaceful feeling.
243. A priest that doesn't rush you, that is willing to discuss things in a brief spiritual direction type way if needed.
244. Peace of mind.
245. Getting my sins 'off my chest' and getting some helpful ways to deal with life.
246. It's nice to come out feeling like a weight has been lifted.
247. A non-judgmental attitude, kindness, welcoming.
248. Empathy! Even just a knowing sigh helps. Someone who gives thoughtful and respectful advice.
249. A sense of peace that comes from knowing Christ's mercy.
250. A release from negativity and a feeling of peace.
251. Insight
252. I don't look for anything besides absolution. I was surprised when the priest began offering advice.
253. Compassion.
254. Safe space to share.
255. Understanding of how better to grow in faith.
256. Guidance, empathy, comfort.
257. Peace, solutions to some of my issues, guidance.
258. Someone to talk with who is helpful and kind.
259. Advice on how to deal with particular behavior or problems.
260. Empathy.
261. Any helpful insights as to how I can grow in faith. Because I couple confession with spiritual direction, I like that the confessor sometimes suggests a challenge, activity, or task to live my faith more authentically.
262. A conversation with a priest who is rooted not just in theology but in human reality, who can help me understand God's mercy at work in my own life.
263. An attentive listener. Someone who can empathize and show compassion.
264. Peace.
265. Counseling on how to manage occasions of sin.
266. Advice on how to have a more fruitful prayer life and how to grow in virtue.
267. Encouragement and practical, real life things I can do to make God more central in my daily routine.
268. A helpful talk, face to face, and no judgment.
269. Guidance on making a good confession, advice on how to do better going forward
270. Kindness.
271. Times that fit my schedule – the more availability, the better.
272. Grace, strength. To express my love for God
273. To be re-charged.
274. Just a compassionate priest and one who is not in a hurry.

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275. Hope, recommendations to avoid the same sin, sometimes comfort
276. If the priest and I know each other, that he says hello and uses my name.
277. Compassionate guidance.
278. Direction.
279. Peace of mind; relief.
280. Relief.
281. Suggestions for issues that are tripping me up.
282. A priest who is an attentive and compassionate listener
283. Help with figuring out how to work through issues that lead me to sin. What can I do to stop judging others, for example?
284. Advice, suggestions.
285. The more personal the priest can be to reality and the struggle of Catholics in the world today. I think the word would be humility.
286. A priest who is not legalistic.
287. Some spiritual direction in the sense of a spiritual conversation to provide me with some real thoughts as I continue through the days afterwards.
288. A release of long held feelings of guilt.
289. Welcome. Understanding. A lack of judgment. Someone who won't shame me.
290. Assistance with self-reflection. Help to see the joy of the Sacrament.
291. Reconciliation not just with God but with the Church. Reconciliation is a two-way street and can only occur if both parties play an active role.
292. Grace and strength.
293. Peace of mind and heart.
294. Respectful attention and good listening please
295. Generally, I approach Confession with dread and confusion as to what to say. So I look forward to the feeling of relief when what is often an ordeal for me is over.
296. Anonymity.
297. A kind smile from the Confessor. A fitting penance. Sometimes I feel like I get off too easy.
298. Grace
299. Clarity, understanding myself better, comfort.
300. A meaningful penance.
301. Peace of mind and heart, knowing God has blessed me with forgiveness.
302. New perspectives, different approaches.
303. Advice to deepen my relationship with Jesus, for example, like how to let go of anger, etc.
304. Unburdening myself.
305. I would like a scripture reading, but many priests do not.
306. Penance.
307. A kind confessor.
308. A little advice or encouragement in response to my particular sin.
309. The feeling of having a weight lifted from my shoulders and advice on how to avoid those same sins again.
310. Awareness that God loves me.
311. A way to help me purposely reflect, guidance on change without shaming me or increasing my guilt.

312. Peace.
313. A listening heart and a helpful way to make amends.
314. Kindness, truth, challenge, and suggestions in response to what I confessed
315. Respectful attention and good listening.
316. A sense of perspective. How big a deal is something I confessed? Am I weird, is this just me, etc.?
317. Talking with the priest.
318. Some advice or perhaps suggestions on readings I can do.
319. Patience. Not being yelled at, attacked, or judged.
320. Spiritual guidance and understanding.
321. Although I know it is not the primary purpose of the Sacrament, I choose confessors I know and trust to receive advice. I think of it as "spiritual light and direction."
322. A chance to unpack my baggage, so to speak.
323. Acceptance.
324. Advice on how to avoid sin.
325. I prefer anonymity.
326. Someone willing to listen and hear me.
327. Guidance from the priest.
328. Relief at saying out loud things that I am not proud of.
329. Mercy, love, kindness, the face of Christ, counseling, good dialogue, and understanding.
330. Spiritual guidance.
331. At some level, help not to sin again, not merely forgiveness. Having reconciliation be more akin to a visit to a therapist would be welcome.
332. Some counseling regarding sins confessed. A pleasant demeanor of the priest.
333. Succinct wisdom.
334. Suggestions for moving forward. How I might improve and move on from sin?
335. Direction.
336. Guidance on recognizing the signs of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in my life.
337. Words of advice to help me not to sin.
338. An experienced priest to give me concrete suggestions on how to address my problems, particularly selfishness and pornography use.
339. Suggestions on improving spirituality.
340. Compassion and understanding.
341. Compassion. Non-judgmental.
342. Spiritual advice (a mini-spiritual direction on "next things" moving forward in Christ) and compassion!
343. I definitely don't want advice from a priest who has no idea what it's like to walk in my shoes.
344. Spiritual direction.
345. I desire a listening presence so I go to friends instead of "professional confessors."
346. Starting over with God. I am not seeking advice or extensive conversation with priest.
347. A sense of peace and lack of judgment.
348. It's more meaningful if the priest functions as a spiritual director. The ritual on it's own does little for me.
349. Guidance in personal and spiritual matters.

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350. Someone who doesn't make me justify myself or make me feel guilty about getting divorced from a violent man.
351. Peace. Discretion. Advice on best way to move forward.
352. Grace.
353. I feel so relieved of the burden that my soul carried. Peace within my soul.
354. Mercy, in the best sense: Divine Mercy.
355. Compassion, understanding, words of wisdom.
356. Guidance in how to grow in virtue.
357. Healing, a sense of peace.
358. Encouragement, advice.
359. Encouragement.
360. Relief. Peace within my soul.
361. Compassion.
362. Spiritual guidance.
363. An empathetic priest who shows interest through perceptive follow-up questions
364. Feeling "back on track," a strengthened relationship with Jesus.
365. Understanding.
366. Understanding of human failings. Encouragement to keep trying. Assurance of God's love.
367. Honesty.
368. I would love to be able to receive advice, spiritual support and direction.
369. Guidance on how I should feel about my choices: sometimes I'm too hard on myself, other times too easy.
370. A priest who listens.
371. Mercy and understanding.
372. Spiritual guidance and care.
373. The feeling of getting something off my chest. Further understanding on the church's position on specific sins committed. There's a lot of misinformation from generations ago.
374. Spiritual guidance.
375. Guidance.
376. A clear and concise penance, not an open-ended penance leaving doubt on whether you completed it.
377. I want to know that my confessor heard me and responds with compassion.
378. Understanding, acceptance and realistic advice on how not to sin again or fight the devil.
379. A better understanding of my desires and self-image in the context of the faith.
380. Spiritual comfort through the tenderness of Jesus' mercy.
381. That feeling of relief when I no longer carry the weight of my guilt.
382. Peace.
383. Words of wisdom from the priest to guide my path forward as I strive to live a holy life.
384. I appreciate when I receive good counsel/spiritual advice.
385. A sense of peace and that God and I have a closer relationship.
386. A priest who is encouraging and gives helpful feedback and suggestions.
387. Advice and guidance, a sense of peace.

388. Relief.
389. Peace.
390. How to understand better my sins and the path to avoid them.
391. A moment with God and a time to reflect on being a better Catholic and Christian.
392. God's love and mercy conveyed by the confessor. Help in conscience formation.
393. Peace through the forgiveness of sins. Reconciliation sometimes feels like therapy.
394. Some spiritual counseling or spiritual direction.
395. Compassion from the minister.
396. A feeling of peace. Closure on regrets or guilt.
397. To have a better understanding of my spiritual life.
398. Guidance, empathy, understanding, help.
399. Reassurance.
400. Forgiveness.
401. A brief reflection, sometimes from Scripture that is either specific to me or general. A prayerful penance.
402. Spiritual counsel.
403. Sometimes I would like advice. I don't want a psychologist, but it would be nice to have a discussion on more difficult areas of our religion/sin. Sometimes priests say things without knowing the complexity of a situation.
404. Understanding and compassionate response.
405. Peace and hope.
406. Clearly stated penance.
407. Face-to-face confessions. More and more are using screens and kneelers now.
408. A penance that fits the situation and helps me to move forward.
409. Spiritual direction.
410. Counsel and penance.
411. An opportunity to discover ways I may offend God but not be aware of them.
412. Spiritual advice and direction.
413. Counsel.
414. Feeling of relief - a weight lifted off my shoulders!
415. A listening ear.
416. When I approach the priest, I like to greet him and shake his hand and I am hoping this is reciprocated. It provides a feeling of being welcomed. I do not want to feel "rushed." I want to feel like I am really being heard.
417. Some degree of Spiritual Counseling, like being asked, "Why do you think you're doing that?"
418. Listening ear, compassion, and prayer.
419. Relief.
420. Guidance, words of encouragement.
421. Mercy and the reassurance that Jesus loves me despite my sins. It helps to know that I'm not alone in my struggles.
422. Guidance, reassurance.
423. Guidance.
424. Spiritual healing, advice.
425. Encouragement.
426. Guidance, reassurance.

*Merciful Like the Father*

427. How could anything compare to absolution?
428. Feeling the weight of sin removed. Help with sorrow for the committed sins. Some good counsel, too.
429. Advice for how to stop sinning.
430. Guidance.
431. Spiritual direction.
432. The grace that comes with the sacrament
433. Empathy as to why I commit certain sins.
434. A warm welcome and understanding.
435. Patient listening and empathy.
436. Some sense of an encounter with the living God.
437. A priest who is friendly, greets you with a hello, and helps answer questions about sins.
438. Dialogue to help me on the way to forgive myself.
439. Someone to share my struggles.
440. Honestly, most of the time, I go purely for absolution so that I can receive the Eucharist.
441. General guidance, help to not sin in the same ways again.
442. A bit of time to delve into some issues I'm struggling with.
443. General guidance, help to not sin in the same ways again.
444. Good suggestions as to how to improve my Spiritual Life, as a Spiritual Advisor would.
445. To be as non-awkward as it can possibly be. Please don't ask questions or give advice on things I confess unless I ask. Just talk about Jesus and his love and mercy.
446. A merciful encounter with Jesus.
447. I look for "a new beginning." An awareness that I am called to be a better person!
448. Mainly absolution, but also just some personal reflection.
449. A priest who faithfully says the prayer of absolution in its entirety, without any alterations that would potentially invalidate the sacrament.
450. The feeling of comfort and understanding from the priest, as well as some good life advice.
451. Calm, welcoming disposition in the priest. Private area to complete the penance.
452. Attentiveness. Some priests act like they can't wait to get out of the confessional and seem irritated while you are confessing your sins.
453. The feeling that I have reconnected with God
454. Being listened to and accepted, encouraged.
455. Kindness, compassion, mercy.
456. Good spiritual advice and a different perspective.
457. Genuine spiritual guidance surrounding my sin, some Scripture, and a true experience of mercy.
458. Realistic encouragement from the priest to live a life of holiness.
459. Some encouragement to keep trying to be faithful to God and others.
460. Guidance on how to avoid my sins and feedback on the quality of my confession with advice on how to better examine my conscience.
461. Priestly words of wisdom.
462. Good pastoral advice.

463. Compassion, understanding, comfort, affirmation, welcoming.
464. Encouragement but also maybe admonishment, something to humble me and prevent my being comfortable in my sins.
465. An understanding priest. I don't need nor want to be chastised for my sins; I already have beaten myself up for them.
466. Guidance from the priest.
467. Comfort and the help of the Holy Spirit not to sin again.
468. Spiritual advice.
469. Understanding.
470. Guidance on how to handle situations that cause me to sin.
471. Support and understanding.
472. Advice from the priest.
473. To be honest and truthful!
474. Counseling and spiritual direction.
475. Discussion of ways I might can change my life and habits to avoid transgressions in the future.
476. Penance. I wouldn't mind some questions about my sins so that I could feel like I've honestly presented the sin to the priest and to myself. Possibly an action item outside of penance that could help me focus on a virtue.
477. A willing ear. Advice sometimes. Answers to questions about faith or morals.
478. Human empathy, God's love.
479. Brief advice or recommendations for overcoming habitual sin.
480. Perhaps a brief bit of spiritual direction.
481. The presence of God.
482. Not being psychoanalyzed in the confessional.
483. Meditative time to reflect on renewing my relationship with Christ.
484. The feeling of accompaniment. Help in confessing my sins and for my struggles in prayer.
485. A penance that helps me to grow. Suggestions to help me "avoid near occasions of sin" relative to my particular temptations.
486. Sympathy.
487. Healing.
488. Advice, especially if confessing something difficult, like a rift in familial relationships.
489. Some guidance or reflection on dealing with my sins. Suggestions for improvement, maybe references to scripture passages.
490. Wise priestly perspective on the challenges in need of healing.
491. Empathy, humility, guidance, reassurance.
492. Insight on how to combat specific sins.
493. Someone pastoral and gentle who will offer advice about an appropriate penance rather than just say "5 Hail Marys," and send you away.
494. Counseling and consolation. A confessor who reminds me of how far I have come and that, in the grand scheme of things, my sins are not so bad.
495. I'm happy to receive good advice to help with my spiritual life.
496. The priest usually doesn't have to say a whole lot.

*Merciful Like the Father*

497. A priest who doesn't water down the faith, who knows the gravity of sin and doesn't try to make me "feel" better, but who actually advises about how to avoid sin so I can "be" better.
498. A small amount of spiritual direction by a regular confessor.
499. Compassion and a sense that God has heard my plea.
500. Compassion.
501. Wise counsel, encouragement, compassion.
502. Compassionate and a nonjudgmental ear.
503. Sincerity. Blessing.
504. Counseling on how to repent or change.
505. Healing and nurturing in my relationship with the Lord.
506. Compassion and advice.
507. Peace in my heart.
508. Spiritual direction. Advice on how to stop habitual sins.
509. The grace needed to overcome my sins.
510. Guidance.
511. Guidance.
512. I am not sure I go looking for it but I always appreciate the spiritual direction, counseling, outside perspective priests offer. Usually their perspective helps me go easier on myself.
513. Genuine caring, especially from the ones I will never see again.
514. Peace and comfort.
515. The things the priest tell me to do at the end.
516. Guidance. I'm not always comfortable with what I was traditionally taught about sin. I like to be able to discuss my transgressions with my confessor.
517. A better understanding of the root causes of my actions; a compassionate heart.
518. Clarity. I want to get an extra set of eyes on my life to see if I am seeing myself clearly.
519. Kindness love and forgiveness.
520. Peace.
521. Compassion and no judgment.
522. Peace and comfort, but most of all love.
523. The healing graces that also help overcome sin.
524. Good counsel from the priest!
525. I listen for an attentive ear and good advice.
526. The opportunity to go face-to-face. I have panic attacks if I have to go behind a screen.
527. Recommendations on how to pray about the problem/situation I'm confessing.
528. Some spiritual direction if it is a priest I know.
529. Guidance.
530. Truth, words of hope.
531. Advice. Spiritual Direction.
532. Counseling on how to be better and how to do better.
533. The advice the priest gives. He's heard it all and knows how to help us avoid the same sins again.
534. Reassurance and any relevant insights from the confessor.
535. What would a person look for besides absolution?
536. Some counseling and encouragement.

537. I look for absolution for my sins, what else would I expect?
538. I love help and guidance, input.
539. Pastoral direction.
540. Advice on how to get better. Overcoming the sins I commit over and over.
541. Guidance.
542. Advice and guidance.
543. Advice, suggested readings, encouragement.
544. Peace, a new start to a new day.
545. Insight into myself, sin, human nature, and God.
546. Healing and grace.
547. I look for advice and perspective, some suggestions as to overcome challenges, and some perspective with regard to sins as well as life.
548. Someone to care and listen and advise.
549. Peace in my soul so that my relationship with Our Lord will grow.
550. Advice on how to improve who I am.
551. Reassurance.
552. Spiritual advice and encouragement.
553. A little conversation.
554. A penance that is appropriate for growth in holiness.
555. An understanding of what led me to sin and why.
556. A compassionate listener with good Biblical advice and helpful suggestions to improve.
557. Encouragement and support on the journey of faith.
558. Peace. Having the priest listen to me. Feeling Jesus' love.
559. Peace of mind, venting pent up issues that cause me angst and build up tension.
560. Counseling and advice.
561. A priest who listens and gives good advice.
562. That the priest really believes that he is giving to us absolution from God.
563. Help to get up again and continue to journey.
564. Spiritual direction.
565. Feeling closer to God. A sense of peace.
566. Short advice on avoiding the same sins.
567. A feeling of peace and understanding from confessor. Not feeling rushed.
568. Peace of mind; freedom from sin, at least for awhile, the feeling of grace and closeness to God.
569. Guidance.
570. Release from guilt and shame.
571. Sound spiritual advice.
572. Guidance and recommendations: books to read on a special topic, podcasts to listen to, lives of specific saints to learn more about.
573. Peace of mind and the love of our Lord.
574. I look for advice on how to battle the sins I'm fighting against.
575. A priest who listens to my confession, reflects on my confession, gives feedback on how I can improve, especially in the areas I've confessed and gives a penance that helps me grow closer to God.

*Merciful Like the Father*

576. Encouragement for going forward, a reminder that God is always there, waiting for us to ask Him to forgive us.
577. Feedback on how to change my behavior and grow in faith.
578. Advice on how to not fall back to the sins I confess.
579. Peace.
580. Helping in forming a good conscience; practical advice to avoid sin; learning more about the faith; learning new devotions as part of penance.
581. Sometimes a bit of advice or counsel, if the line isn't too long.
582. Meeting a priest, not a counselor. Help to be sure if what I did is a sin or is serious.
583. Solid advice to grow virtue and avoid sin.
584. Absolution and guidance.
585. Peace.
586. To come out inspired and help to get my life on a positive track.
587. Personal one-on-one help by priest.
588. Advice.
589. The ability to convey honestly, time allowing, how I stumbled into sin. The reminder that no sin is beyond God's forgiveness. A practical penance.
590. A feeling of happiness.
591. To have God's representative show the love of the Father in the parable of the prodigal son.
592. Holy Wisdom.
593. The freedom not to return to the things that I have confessed and the ability to make a change in my life
594. Guidance on how to help avoid falling into the same sin.
595. Talking out your mistakes and sins, rather than just saying a list of sins.
596. A little practical advice.
597. Peace of mind.
598. Conversation, prayers, and a blessing.
599. Simplicity. Questions about who I am don't help. "How old are you?" "What do you do?" Priests should focus on the sins confessed. There's plenty of content there.
600. Connection with another human to speak out loud of something that is on my soul.
601. An individual one-on-one teaching moment to help me get more out of the sacrament.
602. Grace
603. Advice, encouraging words, no lectures.
604. Spiritual direction, guidance.
605. Guidance.
606. A sense of peace and forgiveness from bringing my sins to God.
607. When a priest add some of his wisdom. Having said that, I realize that confession is not a therapy session or spiritual direction, and getting absolution is a tremendous, most humbly and wonderful gift!
608. Reassurance.
609. A few words of spiritual direction.
610. Getting back into the state of grace.
611. Guidance and support.
612. Reassuring counsel! A direct penance.

613. It's always nice to hear a word of encouragement and advice. Sometimes I need guidance about an unusual situation, such as dealing with a transgender family member, because the things I've tried so far don't seem to be working.
614. Advice and clarity.
615. The relief of cleansing.
616. Advice. Love. Acceptance.
617. Guidance as to how I might bring my life into better alignment with the church.
618. Time to briefly visit with and thank the priest.
619. Spiritual guidance.
620. To reconnect with God.
621. Advice and direction.
622. Sometimes just another point of view on a problem helps, like when I have trouble forgiving someone who has wronged me.
623. Understanding.
624. A tender, empathetic response from the priest. I'm already hard enough on myself for my sins.
625. Guidance or advice.
626. Advice. Someone to listen without judging.
627. Thoughtful counsel from someone who truly listens.
628. Reconciliation.
629. An understanding heart and advice on how to avoid the sins in the future. Since time is always limited, quality is much more important to me than quantity.
630. Guidance; recommendations on ways to avoid the sin confessed, how to practice virtue opposite of the sin. Encouragement!
631. Spiritual guidance as to how to grow in the fight against sin and growth in holiness.
632. Comfort, direction.
633. God's grace and understanding on how to forgive myself.
634. Conversation with an understanding priest who reflects God's Love
635. Whatever level of spiritual direction is possible, given the constraints on the priest's time. One priest asked me what concrete steps I had taken to avoid the near occasion of sin in the future and made some suggestions. I immensely appreciated his insights.
636. Healing.
637. Clarity and perhaps guidance in particular situations of sinful behavior, helpful direction in turning away from sin ("to amend my life"), a meaningful penance.
638. Advice, a sense of peace, and not to be looked down upon.
639. Spiritual advice. Most of the time I am just grateful to be absolved.
640. A good listener.
641. Absolution is certainly most important, but I long to hear, through the confessor, the love of Christ, to hear Christ call me cherished and beloved e, despite my many and repeated sins; a confessor who, without minimizing or excusing what I've done, capably shows me that I'm worth saving is a true gift of God.
642. Peace and comfort.
643. A little counsel on overcoming a sin confessed.
644. A feeling that I'm not the only one with these problems and sharing on how to change and feel better.
645. A chance to admit my brokenness out loud

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646. Peace, and a weight lifted.
647. Peace.
648. Understanding, compassion and guidance.
649. Peace and sometimes answers. I have a lot of questions and even some anger about what is going on in the world and the Church, so I look for explanations.
650. Direction.
651. Counsel in overcoming sin when I need it.
652. Peace of mind that I'm getting right with God.
653. Please have a how-to guide. I have forgotten every prayer I learned in 1997 when I made my First Confession. Fear of embarrassment fills me with read.
654. Compassion and understanding.
655. To hear the compassion of a forgiving God, through the gentle comforting voice of my confessor.
656. Kind words of comfort.
657. A simple restart to lead a life away from sin and toward the walk of Jesus.
658. Feedback from the priest on how to do better in the future.
659. Peace of mind and sometimes advice.
660. Good ideas for how to address problems or handle certain situations.
661. Advice.
662. A kind listening ear to talk to.
663. Assistance with forgiveness as well as to realize the root causes of sin.
664. Spiritual advice.
665. Peace.
666. Pastoral advice (brief!) that consoles, encourages, and points the way back towards holiness.
667. A little counsel or recommendation of a useful idea, tool, or learning material related to my issues.
668. A little spiritual direction on the issues I bring up in confession. For the priest to help me have a sense of whether my sins are due to human or spiritual issues.
669. Direction for the future.
670. Peace, compassion.
671. Help in forgiving myself.
672. A priest who will listen to you, who will try to help you not commit these sins again.
673. God
674. Cleansing of soul.
675. Advice to help me confront my faults, letting the Holy Spirit guide us both..
676. A sense of relief
677. Clarity as to whether something is a sin, and counsel to overcome a particular vice.
678. Understanding and patience.
679. A recommendation as to whether I should pursue spiritual direction.
680. Advice.
681. Some advice in moving forward and avoiding temptation when the priest has time.
682. Ideas on how to avoid repetitive sins.
683. Understanding.
684. Frank, honest sharing from the priest. Encouragement.
685. Encouragement.

686. Peace.
687. Compassion, no judging.
688. Peace. Understanding.
689. Spiritual direction pertaining to what I have confessed. For instance, suggestions of prayers or encouragement to frequent the sacraments to help me avoid the sins I have confessed.
690. Comfort.
691. Healing if I have hurt anyone. Help to be a better person.
692. Advice on avoiding repeated sins. Reassurance that our sins are forgotten forever and God still loves us.
693. Some guidance with a particular person I am having trouble to love and understand.
694. Unburdening. Guidance. Being helped to do better, spiritually and morally.
695. Grace and hearing Christ.
696. Confirmation that God loves me regardless.
697. Help with making a better examination of conscience. Those of us from the 60s weren't catechized well.
698. The feeling of freedom from what I did.
699. Peace and guidance.
700. Peace of mind and soul.
701. Spiritual counsel.
702. To be at peace with God and my conscience
703. Some life direction to grow in faith. A priest who isn't just going through the motions.
704. I'm not really looking for spiritual direction, but it is helpful if I'm given something to reflect on to help me overcome one or more of my sins.
705. Guidance and peace. Being truly connected to God. I look forward to penance that is for my sins, not just Our Fathers and Hail Marys..
706. A reminder of God's Mercy as told to Sr. Faustina.
707. Peace of mind.
708. Nothing. Absolution is what I want!
709. Guidance for how to avoid the sins that I have committed, to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."
710. Kindness and compassion. A penance that is relatable.
711. Guidance on the nature of the sin confessed, since we all don't have time for spiritual direction weekly with our priests.
712. Questions answered regarding concerns of "is it or isn't it" an actual sin.
713. A Confessor who hears what I'm saying, listens attentively and provides guidance faithful to the teachings of the Church.
714. Welcoming.
715. A non awkward experience.
716. A priest who cares, who follows the teachings of Christ, who is truthful, and not condemning, who counsels.
717. Counseling and inspiration.
718. Compassion and a sense of direction as to help correct my sinfulness.
719. Peace.
720. I miss the hands on approach during absolution.
721. Good conversation with the priest on how to be a better person.

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722. Peace.
723. Loyalty to the teachings of the church.
724. Someone who understands the struggles of life.
725. Pastoral care and concern. It is a chance to speak with the parish priest who otherwise is very busy.
726. God's love through my confessor.
727. Compassion. Counsel.
728. Help not to hold onto things that hurt my soul and impede my growth.
729. Advice.
730. Advice on how to go and "sin no more." A confessor who listens and seems to believe in the Sacrament.
731. Counsel from the priest, and the growth associated with penance.
732. Helpful tips of how I can work on my sins. What can I do to distract myself from falling into temptation?
733. Being able to say out loud my faults and failings and to know that if I need counsel I will receive it.
734. Counsel and encouragement, help for self reflection and aid in understanding repentance and the grace of God's mercy.
735. Peace of mind.
736. Kindness, compassion, understanding, validation that I am still worthy of God's love. Hope that I can do better. Guiding light to a better way forward.
737. Good, specific advice on how to handle sins. I don't expect priests to have the time to do a full counseling session, but I like getting concrete advice on one thing, something to take away. And anonymity: I want to confess behind a screen kneeling.
738. Peace of mind. An unburdened heart. The Lord's forgiving love.
739. The voice of Jesus, real discussion, compassion and advice.
740. Peace of mind.
741. An understanding and caring priest.
742. Compassion from the priest.
743. A priest who gives me good counsel and an appropriate penance.
744. Help to restore a sense of right relationship with God, to feel closer to God, to restore and heal what I have broken or destroyed in myself.
745. Privacy.
746. Validation as to whether what I am confessing is a result of human nature, and advice on how I can be better and work hard and still make mistakes.
747. Relief and peace of mind.
748. Kindness.
749. As a kid I hoped for the fewest prayers as a penance. I'm 63 and like to believe that I have evolved beyond that. How about a little conversation?
750. There is rarely time, but it is nice if the priest does have time to talk a bit more.
751. I look for guidance from the priest. I want to confess my sins and get help to avoid sinning again.
752. Guidance in dealing with a difficult person or situation and to reconcile it with living my Faith.
753. A little bit of spiritual direction.
754. Counseling.

755. More guidance, more compassion.
756. That the priest gives me support and doesn't belittle me
757. Peace of mind.
758. A helpful priest.
759. Inner peace.
760. Reassurance.
761. Grace to move forward.
762. Direction, guidance.
763. Understanding.
764. A blessing.
765. Advice.
766. Peace.
767. Sharing God's word related to my confession and resources, like Catholic books, Catholic social media sites that may help me in my journey as a Catholic to become more Christ-like.
768. Suggestions from the priest for getting closer to God.
769. Peace.
770. Appreciation for the struggle, encouragement for the future.
771. Spiritual advice, direction.
772. Comfort.
773. Advice and compassion.
774. I always appreciate spiritual counseling.
775. Insight and Mercy.
776. A priest who takes me at my word and doesn't make light of the sacrament.
777. Availability: I look for the day when confession isn't 30 minutes once a week or 10 minutes before the priest has to run out to prepare for Mass.
778. A suitable penance.
779. Kindness.
780. Short bits of spiritual direction.
781. Guidance.
782. A priest filled with the Holy Spirit, who is able and willing to listen, give wise advise and not judge/condemn.
783. Tips on how to do better. These have really made an amazing difference in the way I navigate difficult situations with family members.
784. Words of encouragement and some spiritual direction.
785. A brief, practical bit of advice.
786. Spiritual counsel with regards to the sins I've confessed.
787. Helpful suggestions on how to avoid certain sins.
788. Getting spiritual advice or comfort from the priest.
789. A priest who reflects God's mercy.
790. Solid spiritual advice, beginning with acknowledgment of each sin I've confessed and wise counsel on how to avoid those particular sins, ending with real penance.
791. Advice on how to redirect our occasions of sin in a more Christian way.
792. Advice on how to deal with habitual sins.
793. Advice on being a better Christian and sinning less.
794. Good counsel, and recommendations for avoiding sinful behavior.

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795. Not having to go through the parish bulldog (secretary) who asks my name every time I want to go to confession. Can't there be a dedicated website page or phone number to make appointments?
796. Peace in my heart.
797. Spiritual direction, advice.
798. It is nice when my confessor is able to point me in the right direction, spiritually, for improvement.
799. Advice on how to stop specific sins from recurring in the future, clarity as to making a good examination of conscience.
800. Counseling.
801. It is helpful when the priest asks a follow up question or two to help understand the gravity of the sin (mortal/venial).
802. Compassion and reassurance that our Lord forgives our sins.
803. Someone who will give advice and keep me from making excuses.
804. Meaningful but brief advice.
805. An experience of the love of God. Real reestablishment of relationship.
806. Spiritual direction and counsel.
807. For the priest not to pry or ask questions unless necessary.
808. Advice to take me in a better direction.
809. Clarity when there are confession requirements for indulgences. Quick answers to quick questions about confession when I have them.
810. Advice on how to avoid falling into sin again.
811. Being able to discuss temptations, as suggested by St Frances de Sales in Introduction to the Devout Life.
812. Spiritual advice.
813. A reminder of just how much Jesus wants to forgive me, even more than I want the forgiveness.
814. Spiritual advice and a sense that the priest is confident and authoritative with respect to the sins discussed and confessed.
815. Words of encouragement, and lack of a judgmental approach.
816. Spiritual healing and guidance.
817. Spiritual guidance and strength. Comfort. Words of kindness to uplift the broken heart of a sinner.
818. Maybe a way to avoid repeating the same sin.
819. Spiritual direction or counsel.
820. Sound spiritual advice.
821. Grace to not sin again.
822. A welcoming smile.
823. A penance that will help me to grow and, in particular, that will help me to combat whatever sin I am struggling with at that time.
824. Advice.
825. Counsel.
826. Depends on the number of people in line. Sometimes I look for spiritual direction.
827. A bit of guidance when necessary.
828. I like when the priest selects one of my sins and offers suggestions for overcoming it. Brief and to the point. I'm not expecting spiritual direction in the confessional.

829. Grace and understanding.
830. I am looking for the priest to speak inspired words to help with my attitude and fight the near occasions of sin.
831. Not too long a line and a confessional. I avoid face-to-face.
832. God's Mercy and Grace to avoid sin in the future and the chance (with the Holy Spirit) to take a better look at myself and at my daily habits.
833. Sacramental grace, especially the grace not to sin again.
834. Guidance in overcoming habitual sins.
835. Suggestions on how to mitigate sin. Spiritual guidance.
836. Advice on avoiding sin and conquering temptation.
837. Spiritual direction and discernment of spirits.
838. Some sort of spiritual guidance.
839. Counsel.
840. An exhortation to live a life of virtue.
841. Insight from the priest, clarity about sins and behavior patterns, practical advice.
842. Acceptance from God.
843. A chance to reflect on what I can do better and to ask God to help me with those faults.
844. Grace to live a better life. Counsel. Penance.
845. Perhaps a bit of counseling
846. Good guidance and compassion.
847. Some quick spiritual advice of how to sin no more.
848. A holy response to my sins.
849. Very brief spiritual direction, if relevant to the sins confessed.
850. Help to be closer to Jesus and respond to the grace of conversion.
851. Guidance.
852. Spiritual advice.
853. Peace of mind, happiness after confession, experiencing God's mercy and forgiveness.  
Joy.
854. A conversation with my confessor to help me understand more about my sins.
855. Helpful tips or questions are always welcome.
856. A priest who doesn't ask me all the time, "How many times?" I lose track of how many times I did a particular sin. I don't want to write it down in fear of losing the paper.
857. Understanding on the Church's teaching on the sins I've committed, encouragement that Jesus really does forgive, help with how to avoid the same sins in the future and sometimes a penance that fits the sin.
858. Inner peace.
859. The guidance of the priest.
860. Advice, suggestions on how to work on whatever sin I'm struggling with, kindness and a smile.
861. Spiritual guidance.
862. Counsel sometimes.
863. A sense of relief when it is over.
864. Spiritual direction.
865. Comfort.

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866. Reassurance that God who is the loving Father loves me and has mercy. A penance that provokes thoughts that help me to see why I do what I do.
867. Conversation with spiritual advice and direction.
868. Thought provoking suggestions to help me to really discern my sins, and to turn away from these sins when I am tempted to repeat them.
869. Freedom to speak clearly.
870. Conversation about what I am struggling with, advice, etc.
871. Spiritual counseling.
872. Comfort, advice, direction.
873. Guidance.
874. Help moving forward and guidance as to how not to continue to do the same things that were confessed.
875. A conciliatory atmosphere.
876. Sometimes I have been given insight which was helpful
877. A compassionate explanation of how to change, to buttress my sincere desire to not repeat my sin.
878. A greater opening of my heart to be more in communion with the Holy Spirit.
879. Encouragement and guidance to keep trying to serve God to the best of our ability
880. Humility.
881. A serious understanding of the struggle I'm enduring with sin.
882. Being consoled.
883. A word of encouragement and some direction. Sometimes a special blessing to avoid a recurrent sin.
884. Receiving discernment and guidance from our Lord as to how he wants me to live. This is what I seek when listening to the priest's counsel after confessing my sins.
885. I look for a Confessor who is not in a hurry, gives some good advice, but doesn't spend too much time with each person if not needed. I also appreciate being able to go to the Sacrament face-to-face instead of behind the screen.
886. Spiritual direction although I know Confession is not the place, but I think it's necessary and if the Confessor thinks the spiritual direction would take up too much time he should make arrangements with the penitent to meet privately when there would be more time.
887. Confidence and ability to speak openly with the priest about my sins, questions, doubts and temptations. To get honest and sound advice that applies to me for the balance of my life.
888. Consolation. Advice on how to better live in the example of Christ.
889. Anonymity.
890. A feeling of relief. Advice on avoiding sin.
891. Feeling the priest is really listening to my story. I feel this only happens when I make an appointment; otherwise I always feel rushed. I don't like confessionals. There should always be a face to face option.
892. Good spiritual advice. Encouragement to improve my spiritual life.
893. Guidance and instruction.
894. Spiritual Direction
895. I like to go to a priest who seems approachable and on the friendly side, if feasible.
896. Suggestions and guidance.

897. A reminder that Jesus is present and absolving me of my sins.
898. Reassurance and guidance
899. Guidance on moral issues that I am wrestling with as well as help planning a better path.
900. Sound advice.
901. The peace of Christ.
902. Clear mind and heart.
903. Peace of mind.
904. Guidance and clarity.
905. To be able to ask questions about my faith so that I can grow.
906. Conversation with the priest about my issues.
907. Advice and spiritual direction. I would prefer to know which priest is there. Some are better than others.
908. Welcome and advice.
909. Advice.
910. Priestly counsel.
911. A person who listens with mercy.
912. Guidance in spiritual growth.
913. Advice on how to overcome my faults, encouragement.
914. A sense of peace and mercy
915. Counsel
916. Practical advice on how to grow in holiness, maybe tips on how to avoid certain sins.
917. Good advice to grow spiritually, and a virtual hug from our Lord through the loving and caring words.
918. The sense of peace expressed in the demeanor of the confessor.
919. Direction from my Confessor. I appreciate probing questions that help me recognize, understand, and want to change whatever leads me to sin.
920. Advice, counsel, understanding. A confessor who is focused and attentive.
921. Affirmation, especially when I've had to make a difficult decision due to my faith and face a lot of opposition because of it.
922. Compassion, kindness.
923. Encouragement.
924. Advice, counsel, clarity.
925. Brief but honest feedback and tips on amending one's life, especially with habitual sin and a meaningful but challenging penance.
926. Spiritual Direction to help me with what I just confessed.
927. Guidance and good counsel.
928. A sense of relief and calm.
929. A feeling of peace and being able to start over with a fresh slate.
930. There are times when I really need some consoling words of encouragement spoken with tenderness and compassion, without explaining away my sin.
931. Consolation and encouragement.
932. An empathetic ear.
933. Priestly spiritual guidance and direction. Affirmation from the priest acting in Persona Christi
934. Patience and compassion.

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935. Feedback on issues, especially repeated sins or issues that arise that need divine guidance.
936. Knowledge as to how to live as a fully-baptized catholic.
937. Kindness, not a scolding.
938. The acknowledgement that I have been forgiven in the eyes of Christ.
939. A one-on-one talk with the father.
940. Peace
941. I appreciate a connection with the priest. Not someone looking for me to list when I say bad words or get angry for example but someone willing to listen and discuss deeper issues.
942. Compassion and a black confessional box.
943. Guidance in discerning sin and how to draw closer to God.
944. A confessor who comes across as merciful, as he is in persona Christi.
945. I know it's not always possible if there's a long line or a time crunch, but I always appreciate receiving some good counsel or advice on how to fight against sins I've been struggling with or situations of temptation.
946. I like when the priest talks to me about my sins and gives me advice on how to avoid them.
947. Conversation with the priest.
948. Kindness and reassurance that God loves me, a sinner.
949. Compassion.
950. Counsel. I really appreciate when priests give me a few suggestions or encouragement.
951. A listening ear as well as a sense that the priest cares.
952. Guidance and recommendations from the priest on how to handle a sin I am struggling with.
953. Sometimes spiritual direction or advice.
954. Encouragement, reinforcement that the Father is a forgiving Father
955. I look for direction, discussion and a meaningful penance.
956. Privacy, anonymity. A priest who doesn't downplay or excuse my sins as not important to confess.
957. I look for a progressive priest.
958. I hope to receive God's help with my problems in life.
959. Counsel, not a lot, but some.
960. Being able to ask about areas we have concerns with, and receive an explanation.
961. Compassion and understanding.
962. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk through things, and that the priest is always willing to walk with me in this particular way.
963. Peace of mind.
964. Possible direction on how to avoid the same sins repeatedly.
965. Guidance, advice, reconnection to God and reinvigoration of faith. Peace.
966. Spiritual advice on how to best fight sin.
967. Someone else to talk to besides family or friends.
968. Comfort, friendship, honesty.
969. Friendliness and advice.
970. Advice.

971. A priest who will not chew me out for my confession. We are there because we know what we did was wrong and are confessing it. Discussion is very different from a chewing out.
972. Counseling.
973. Advice on how to be better.
974. Good penance – more than two Hail Marys and two Our Fathers.
975. That feeling of cleanliness and everything being right between myself and God.
976. An answer to a question I might have.
977. Counsel.
978. The peace that I have been forgiven, the penance I will be assigned (usually appropriately applicable to my sins), and sometimes the advice/tips to rid myself of my repeating my offenses.
979. A feeling of peace.
980. A listening ear that validates my imperfections as a human.
981. Words of comfort and advice for moving forward in faith.
982. Spiritual insights, suggestions on reforming my life of these sins, and an abundance of grace!
983. Freedom from the burden of guilt.
984. Counseling or advice.
985. I look for a sense of peace of mind that I have admitted my weaknesses and am willing to work harder at being a better person of God.
986. Feeling that the priest is really praying for me as I give my confession.
987. If there is a question I have regarding a faith based question, I ask the priest for clarification. If the question is regarding a family matter, I ask the priest for recommendations.
988. A helpful penance.
989. A better understanding of my sin as the church sees it.
990. Guidance on resisting temptation for sins I struggle with over and over. Correction if I'm being over scrupulous with distinguishing between my anxiety and ADHD symptoms and sin.
991. A compassionate representative of our Lord.
992. More advice from the priest.
993. The opportunity to talk through challenges with a Man of God. Suggestions for being a better Daughter of God.
994. Good spiritual counseling.
995. Help toward a closer relationship with Jesus.
996. Letting go.
997. For the priest to give insight, ideas on how to avoid future temptations or difficulties, or relate to my difficulties, if possible.
998. Peace.
999. Help with the examination of conscience.
1000. Spiritual guidance.
1001. Ways to avoid a particular sin. A penance that relates to the sins confessed rather than "one size fits all."
1002. Getting things off my chest that are weighing me down.
1003. Spiritual advice to fight those sins just confessed.

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1004. Counsel.
1005. Sometimes I feel my penance is not adequate. Praying an Our Father or Hail Mary sometimes does not feel like a penance.
1006. Spiritual guidance/counsel to avoid the situation in the future, or to work on a predominant fault that keeps bringing me to confession.
1007. Spiritual guidance.
1008. Guidance.
1009. A Word of encouragement and direction to grow spiritually in my area of weakness.
1010. Peace and hope for the future and help to overcome my lack of understanding.
1011. Advice and reassurance.
1012. Maybe a few words of guidance or enlightenment in regards to what I might have confessed! Also a penance directly linked to my confession or to Scripture that might be incorporated in my penance! Help to make it a moment of prayer!
1013. Counsel and support for living a good Catholic life.
1014. A sense of community. Why is this sacrament celebrated behind closed doors?
1015. I want the priest to help me understand the broader implications of my sin, and how it hurts others, especially those I love.
1016. Guidance and acceptance.
1017. A bit of guidance, especially if I am struggling with the same sins over and over.
1018. An interested confessor. Sometimes they are distant and cold.
1019. A chance to explore my spiritual relationship with God and community.
1020. Maybe advice, which I have never had!
1021. A time to reflect.
1022. Insight.
1023. An empathetic listener.
1024. The opportunity to share the difficulties that I'm having and get help.
1025. Understanding and empathy.
1026. A compassionate priest who takes some time to personalize his words to me and to give guidance and encouragement.
1027. The wisdom and advice given by the priest. Some priest don't offer advice, I really appreciate when they do. It is always nice to have something to strive for and work on in one's spiritual and everyday life.
1028. Advice from the priest.
1029. I appreciate it when the priest offers advice and wisdom regarding the particular sin I am confessing, if appropriate. Sometimes, though, there is not enough time.
1030. Empathy and understanding, not judgment.
1031. Counsel.
1032. Spiritual guidance along the path of virtue, rooting out of the causes of lack of Christlikeness.
1033. Guidance on personal issues. Advice on how to be a better person.
1034. Reassurance from the priest that I am okay as a human being, that I am not a horrible person.
1035. Wise counsel.
1036. Healing, the peace of Christ.
1037. Guidance and support from the priest, although I don't receive it as often as I would like.

1038. A priest who will listen with their heart
1039. Advice regarding issues confessed and what to address.
1040. Peace of mind.
1041. I like it when the priest asks if I have any questions. This has not happened very often.
1042. The sense of relief.
1043. When I was young, I became very ill and discouraged. I told the priest I didn't feel a need to go on living. He told me that he would say his next Mass for me. That really affected me and made me feel much better in my mind. I was most grateful for this help.
1044. Sound advice from my pastor who knows me
1045. A few moments to discuss a sin that is recurring or to seek advice on a spiritual matter.
1046. Guidance and counsel about issues I am experiencing in my family.
1047. Healing.
1048. I look for spiritual guidance and encouragement.
1049. Guidance on how to truly detest sin and desire and grow in holiness.
1050. I appreciate any helpful depth that the confessor might share.
1051. Comfort and a chance to speak and receive guidance with someone who is objective.
1052. Spiritual guidance, if possible.
1053. Empathy and consolation.
1054. I do certainly welcome guidance, particularly if I'm really struggling in a particular area of sin.
1055. Human connection, empathy, understanding. I already know going in that God will understand, empathize, and forgive. It's good when that is reinforced by the priest.
1056. Help to build my relationship with God.
1057. Relief and tranquility.
1058. Advice and an experience of God's mercy.
1059. Advice and counsel.
1060. Some direction and counseling on how I should live my life.
1061. Peace of mind and a chance to share my shortcomings
1062. Being at peace with myself afterwards.
1063. Consolation, encouragement, a sense that while my failures are failures, and they are always the same failures, it is possible to screw up less often.
1064. Compassion, guidance, encouragement.
1065. Spiritual guidance from the confessor, grace to do better, peace of mind
1066. Some spiritual direction.
1067. At times I have needed guidance.
1068. A kind priest.
1069. A listening and compassionate presence.
1070. Encouragement to make permanent change, with reliance on God's grace.
1071. Competence and confidence in the confessor. A confessor who knows how to ask the (few) right questions and who can tell when there is no need for a spiritual direction session. A confessor who is aware of a line of penitents outside and does not allow one penitent to monopolize time. I look for confessions starting on time. It's a poor showing professionally and pastorally to start late. And some priests start (very) late,

habitually, which can annoy and antagonize penitents who have to wait, who are already perhaps in a delicate situation.

1072. Advice on how to avoid sins again in the future
1073. To express my sorrow for having caused pain and hurt to others for my sins, to ask for forgiveness and reclaiming peace in my heart and soul by God's immense love.
1074. Spiritual direction.
1075. When you are harsh and judgmental and feel that God sees you that way, it's really important to have my confessor show me a kinder face of God.
1076. I look forward to creative and thoughtful penance.
1077. That feeling of a clean slate. I feel a sense of peacefulness.
1078. Good advice, a priest who is willing to listen, one who stays calm and is comforting, and, if I need it, challenges me.
1079. A sense of community by speaking one-on-one with a priest.
1080. Maybe some encouragement to better myself.
1081. Cleansing of my conscience and acknowledging repeatedly self-destructive behaviors.
1082. Grace and strength to overcome temptations in the future.
1083. Some degree of guidance.
1084. Occasionally, an entree into deeper spiritual direction.
1085. Counsel, if asked for by penitent.
1086. Counsel for overcoming the temptation and not giving in to sin again.
1087. Advice on how to avoid recurring sins. I know some say reconciliation isn't the place for that, but a spiritual director is hard to come by!
1088. Encouragement and support for my Christian journey.
1089. A confessor who is a good listener, if only he acknowledges what was said by the penitent.
1090. A feeling of peace, overall positive feeling, and a feeling of hope.
1091. The confidence that comes from being back in a state of grace.
1092. Someone who listens and receives without judgment, who can offer advice for the future in a charitable way, who can mirror God's love to me.
1093. Getting advice or suggestions to help me with those sins with which I struggle: anything from special prayers to say to reading materials or other suggestions.
1094. Direction or counseling on how to do better and be better.
1095. Some spiritual guidance
1096. Short pieces of spiritual wisdom on how to deal with a problem.
1097. Advice or conversation.
1098. Comfort, attentiveness and forgiveness. You don't get up the courage to go to confession in order to be told by the person on the other side how morally bad you are or what the church is teaching is. We already know.
1099. A loving confessor who assures me that Our Lord does forgive me.
1100. Spiritual advice and consolation.
1101. Spiritual advice.
1102. Guidance on growing in holiness.
1103. Guidance.
1104. The need to share my shortcomings and get forgiveness and help.

1105. I long for a sense of peace and "being all right" with God. Even though I know God loves me unconditionally, I don't want anything on my part keeping me away from divine intimacy.
1106. A well organized line or process to see the priest.
1107. Occasional advice.
1108. Guidance.
1109. An affirmation of God's love.
1110. The impression that I am being actively listened to.
1111. Feeling like the priest is listening and not just rushing me through.
1112. Strategies to overcome a particular fault. Encouragement especially about going to Mass on Sundays or Saturday afternoons.
1113. Good advice, an opportunity to verbally process things.
1114. Healing of the heart and soul, a new peace.
1115. Advice from priest as to what my sin is. I'm often not sure.
1116. Guidance on how to avoid sin in the future, whether being referred to Scripture for inspiration or any other guidance.
1117. Peace.
1118. Peace. If I'm concerned about things at work, a priest who will take a few minutes to give advice.
1119. Help for going forward, reassurance of God's love for me, advice about how to refocus aspects of my life.
1120. Encouragement.
1121. Peace of heart
1122. Encouragement to keep pursuing sainthood, as well as being called on to own up to my sins.
1123. Sometimes spiritual advice and a little direction.
1124. Suggestions from the priest about things that I can do to be closer to God and learn from the Saints.
1125. Words of wisdom, or at least good advice and suggestions.
1126. I appreciate when the priest counsels based on the sins I confessed in a specific way and shares helpful observations.
1127. Guidance, humility, hope.
1128. A priest who's willing to talk out my sins with me or help me pray about why I commit them.
1129. A bit of good counsel.
1130. Ideally, there would be some recurring spiritual direction as part of Confession. Not just, "Say ten Hail Marys and an Our Father." It would be more helpful to talk about how the Lord speaks to us in our daily lives so I can learn to hear Him better in the moment, and hopefully be less likely to fall into a bad habit or sin the next time.
1131. Comfort and inspiration.
1132. Sometimes some information regarding morality or ways to avoid sin.
1133. Advice, penance.
1134. Understanding and encouragement.
1135. Sometimes I'm in search of how to handle a situation with family and appreciate the priest's counsel.
1136. Helpful tools or suggestion to help me avoid my sinful flaws.

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1137. A penance that is thoughtful and related to what I shared, not random or trite; a confessor who is empathetic and a good listener.
1138. A few words of guidance, encouragement or even exhortation.
1139. I am also looking for direction and advice on how to be a better disciple.
1140. I only go once a year at most because I feel that I have to. I would appreciate a conversation with some insight as to how I might walk better with Jesus.
1141. Guidance, emotional support, validation.
1142. Advice.
1143. An understanding priest who gives me concrete suggestions as to what to do to grow closer to God
1144. While not going for spiritual direction, counseling or a lecture, I do appreciate a brief acknowledgement or recognition of the sins confessed and a word of advice to overcome those challenges in the future.
1145. Some conversation.
1146. I don't expect more than absolution, but I do appreciate some sort of feedback. Whether it's motivation, consolation, or a well-deserved scolding. It makes the experience a bit more personable.
1147. Maybe some insight into dealing with besetting sins.
1148. Guidance, direction, wisdom, catechesis, gentle strength. I don't need someone to make me feel better but become better!
1149. Compassion from the one hearing my sins.
1150. If I need absolution, I go to confession. I work with a spiritual director who is a priest on everything else.
1151. Discussion, suggestions.
1152. Guidance toward lasting conversion. Meaningful penance, too.
1153. A compassionate listening presence and helpful feedback.
1154. God's loving grace and forgiveness.
1155. I look to hear a few words of counsel from the priest.
1156. Anonymity.
1157. Positive communication and encouragement from the priest.
1158. I look to have a better perception of who I am and confession encourages me to show my love to those I'm in contact with and those I don't know who need a loving thought or deed.
1159. Spiritual and other advice from the priest is certainly appreciated but particularly if someone is waiting, I don't think it is appropriate to hog the Confessor's time for a counseling session.
1160. Wise counsel, advice, encouragement.
1161. Counsel and advice to grow in the areas of struggle.
1162. A sense that I have a fresh start.
1163. Not being rushed.
1164. Encouragement and a pep talk on the spiritual life and relationship with Jesus.
1165. Good, firm advice. So many times in my past confession has either been so quick that the priest gives no advice or the priest has been too gentle so that I don't really see the gravity of my sins.
1166. Usually, if there's time, the priest will pick out one of my sins and make a suggestion on how to work on it.

1167. I do not know if spiritual direction is what to call it but some direction and reframing of things.
1168. Compassion, empathy, spiritual guidance.
1169. Compassion.
1170. One who understands my anxiety and depression and doesn't just jump to what I need to avoid. I have deep seated trust issues and don't believe I am worthy of being loved and accepted, so anything that confirms this, just sets my anxiety and depression firmer. Priests need better understanding of mental health issues and how to address them in confession.
1171. Comfort. Kindness. Help.
1172. Discernment about what might be the root or underlying patterns of my sins.
1173. I look for a warm, attentive listener who reflects the love of Christ.
1174. I like when I'm given a penance that is unique (not just "pray 5 Hail Mary's"), like to reflect on a certain passage of Scripture or something like that.
1175. Convenient time (love it when it's available right before or during Mass).
1176. Honesty. Compassion. Advice. A penance that is meaningful, not rote.
1177. Peace of mind.
1178. Counseling, spiritual direction, and resources on how to avoid the sin, especially for recurring or repetitive sins.
1179. Counsel, direction, clarity, peace.
1180. Spiritual guidance or reflection.
1181. Practical advice for something I am struggle with. Mostly validation and appropriate penance.
1182. Guidance.
1183. A caring manner and a relevant penance.
1184. Sometimes I look for advice on a specific matter.
1185. A conversation.
1186. Most of the time, I'm looking for a little bit of counsel, like tips, advice, encouragement, positivity, etc. One priest always gives stuff out during confession, like pamphlets or prayer cards. I never walk away from confession empty-handed. I really love that.
1187. The peace I feel afterwards is everything.
1188. Empathy, guidance.
1189. Talking with the confessor to discern a clearer and more mature understanding of sin's impact and patterns in my life.
1190. Spiritual direction. Sounding board for life.
1191. Strength to avoid sinning again, grace in addition to mercy.
1192. Advice.
1193. A friendly priest.
1194. Advice from the priest on actions I can take to keep that sin out of my life.
1195. Perspective and guidance on sins that I could focus on and how to actively avoid them in my life.
1196. Spiritual direction.
1197. Encouragement, but not long discussions or a counseling session.

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1198. How to tell what's actually a sin given context in my life, and if I'm actually being attentive enough in an examination of conscience. I have no idea whether what I'm bringing to God is good enough, or how to evaluate what's sin and what's not.
1199. I always hope for an encouraging word.
1200. Spiritual direction.
1201. Being able to talk to the priest about a problem. I know it not a counseling session but I like to get some input and suggestions.
1202. Peace.
1203. Brief, concise points of counsel. It is unhelpful when priests attempt to console or make me feel better for my sins. I appreciate feedback that encourages me to do better.
1204. Deepen relationship with God and encourage others to do the same.
1205. Being listened to. Empathy.
1206. Guidance and practical ways of growth.
1207. A kind priest.
1208. Advice on how not to fall into the same traps again.
1209. Looking for grace and guidance to find the right direction for my new beginning.
1210. Grace, peace, connection to the Church, mercy.
1211. Spiritual direction.
1212. Compassion.
1213. A compassionate priest.
1214. A compassionate and merciful welcome from my confessor, for my wretchedness is well known to me.
1215. Compassion and prayerfulness.
1216. Compassion.
1217. Sometimes I have technical questions. Like I've asked about what is a sin in regards to drinking and when it becomes a mortal sin.
1218. Absolution and peace for my soul.
1219. Guidance.
1220. Love, kindness and understanding.
1221. Understanding and compassion.
1222. To be given mercy but also a challenge to change.
1223. I seek understanding and acceptance.
1224. A feeling of relief.
1225. Kindness.
1226. Spiritual guidance.
1227. Brief spiritual guidance or a "practical take away" for growing in virtue or even a scripture, or virtue, or thought to meditate upon for growing in holiness.
1228. Talking through our sins with the priest does heal and release the pain, resentments, and anger inside.
1229. I look forward to the times the priest has say a bit more to me before my penance. This isn't always feasible with long lines, but it always helps.
1230. Counsel.
1231. Spiritual direction.
1232. It's just enough not to have the priest telling me that my confession was not good, that I am hiding the most important sins or am superficial or telling me sins I have to confess.

1233. I appreciate advice for overcoming habitual sin.
1234. Understanding.
1235. A priest who will give a penance that helps go deeper to uncover roots and to increase love of God.
1236. Spiritual direction.
1237. I look for encouragement to keep up the good fight, and for kindness.
1238. Peace.
1239. I enjoy getting "things off my chest" by sharing in confession. I am willing to follow through on whatever penance the priest offers.
1240. Peace with Christ.
1241. A personal encounter with the priest. Some priests only give absolution and don't dialogue with the penitents and there is no way to encounter mercy or understand the pattern of a particular sin without this relational ministry and help.
1242. In the hope that a confessor can lift my soul through the words of Christ despite my heavy heart.
1243. A sympathetic ear. Sound advice.
1244. If the priest can offer some advice on how to turn away from a particular sin, it is most appreciated.
1245. An encounter with a merciful father.
1246. Good dialogue. Good, quick spiritual direction.
1247. Someone familiar with the mystical tradition of the Church and with the Church's Social Teaching.
1248. Spiritual direction, feed back.
1249. An understanding priest.
1250. Peace and a sense of a fresh start.
1251. Spiritual guidance.
1252. Spiritual guidance and a helpful penance.
1253. Guidance, compassion.
1254. The sense of a clean start. A dropping of the burdens I've been carrying.
1255. Advice, counsel.
1256. Compassion and understanding.
1257. Understanding. Love. Empathy.
1258. Time to discuss challenging issues with the priest.
1259. Dialogue on any questions. Encouragement. Direction.
1260. Spiritual advice on how actively to grow closer to God given the failings I have confessed. Reinforcement that I have hurt Jesus, to subdue my pride.
1261. A feeling of connection and being understood, an experience of grace, and thoughtful conversation where my sins are not just taken at face value but I'm challenged to put words to the real failure.
1262. Just hearing the words, "God the Father of mercies.... may God give you pardon and peace and I absolve you of your sins," is more than I deserve and often brings me to tears.
1263. Adherence by confessors to the doctrine and dogma of the Apostolic faith.
1264. Good advice and an actual embodiment of the fact that I'm still lovable despite everything I just confessed.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1265. To receive insight from my confessor, to ask questions and gain some spiritual guidance.
1266. Insight, perspective, good counsel.
1267. Insight of another into my behavior as human and forgivable.
1268. Counsel.
1269. Practical advice for avoiding sin.
1270. Help with making an examination of conscience
1271. Advice on how to avoid sin and become closer to God.
1272. Advice on how to overcome sinful habits.
1273. Counsel on occasion.
1274. A place to begin again.
1275. Counsel.
1276. The priest's recommendations and help to figure out how to improve.
1277. Understanding of why I act and think as I do. Unfortunately, few confessors can take the time to do this because confession times are so limited and there are people waiting.
1278. Comfort.
1279. I might additionally want guidance, but only if I trust them to give it.
1280. Understanding advice.
1281. Understanding and a compassionate ear.
1282. When I was younger I sought reassurance and compassion.
1283. Understanding and compassion.
1284. The calming and reassuring tone of the priest's voice.
1285. Spiritual counsel.
1286. A sense of peace and healing.
1287. Healing and the grace to fight with more courage against temptations.
1288. Reassurance of the love of Christ.
1289. A brief reflection from the gospels about God's mercy and love for me.
1290. Sense of being purged of negative feelings.
1291. Acceptance.
1292. I look for a number of things: an experience of God's gratuitous love and mercy, a chance to name what needs healing in my life, greater freedom from sin, and a missioning to love more (live out my baptism) and place greater trust in God (hope).
1293. Peacefulness.
1294. I look for a feeling of relief and hope. I appreciate some words of insight and encouragement.
1295. Freedom.
1296. Spiritual direction.
1297. I'd like guidance. I'm sorry that liability has got so extreme that all one can say is, "I did this, this, and this."
1298. A priest whose heart is open and who really listens.
1299. My own forgiveness, peace.
1300. A priest who is willing to talk with me about my issues, rather than just giving a quick penance and absolution.
1301. Spiritual guidance.

1302. The relief of having unburdened myself of my sins and the opportunity to apologize to another human being for what I have done to wrong others.
1303. I like to get some spiritual direction. I try to make a confession appointment, though, so I won't hold up the line.
1304. Some kind words letting you know that you are welcome and are going about things correctly.
1305. The grace to sin no more.
1306. Absolution is the main reason for my confession. However I am happy to receive all the blessings and graces that come with confession.
1307. To address a certain sin that may jump out to the priest during my confession, to question it or give counsel to overcome it. But I also understand the need to get in as many confessions as possible so I'm not bothered if it is brief.
1308. Comfort; being reminded how much God actually loves me.
1309. Honesty. Active listening. Condemnation of the domestic violence I've endured and comfort.
1310. Good advice.
1311. An appropriate penance. I get a lot out of being told to read an appropriate psalm or pray an appropriate devotion (litany, rosary, chaplet, prayer). A priest once gave me a holy card with a prayer of St. Ephrem and a handwritten message, "Jesus Mercy," which hit the spot.
1312. Spiritual Direction with openness to teach. I am hungry for guidance. After 12 years of Catholic schooling I was lacking in understanding my faith.
1313. Spiritual guidance.
1314. The opportunity to discuss with the priest any spiritual concerns that may be troubling me (within a rational time frame) and comfort in explanations provided.
1315. Comfort and peace of God.
1316. Maybe a little "pep talk." I know what I did and it's helpful to get some positive feedback.
1317. Pleasantness! No irritability! Hope! peace! Joy!
1318. I am looking for the priest to be understanding and kind. I would like him to ask me if there is anything else he could help clarify for me. I appreciate when he says that he will pray for me and how happy Jesus is that I came to confession.
1319. Answers to my problems
1320. The priest's feedback, advice, verbal follow-up, openness to my confession, and tone of voice.

## **What have been your best experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?**

1321. When we received the Sacrament in a reconciliation service with priests from other parish churches present.
1322. Persistent confessions rooting out persistent sins.
1323. Face-to-face, discussing sins and difficulties in my life!
1324. Being called a daughter of God.
1325. When the priest has taken his time to talk with me and I leave feeling better than I came in.
1326. The times I was truly honest in acknowledging my sins and failures
1327. I've always had good, face-to-face experiences my adult life.
1328. Those experiences when I talked face-to-face with a priest and was able to put my sins in context and receive feedback from him.
1329. Feeling that I was truly listened to.
1330. When I went back after years and years away and the priest was open and thoughtful and all the necessary prayers were written down in multiple languages
1331. On a retreat. A large burden I had been carrying was lifted. I had been feeling guilty about a decision I had made earlier in my life. The confessor explained that what I did was in good conscience with what I believed to be correct. I also remember a profound confession when I confessed intense anger at a pastor who was mentally ill and was destroying my home parish. The priest explained righteous anger versus sinful anger and it helped me enormously.
1332. When a priest challenged me to be better but without shaming me.
1333. I once confessed that I lied to a woman who came up to me on the street and asked for money. I told her I didn't have any cash on me. But I did. The priest said, "You are like Peter. You denied the Lord. But remember Peter was given another chance. You will get another chance, too. And you will not fail."
1334. When I was talked to and given some loving suggestions.
1335. When a priest said in response to my being angry for decades at an abusive high school teacher, "That must be a heavy burden to keep carrying."
1336. Spiritual direction from an elderly Abbot, who gave such affirmation, inspiration and motivation.
1337. When I was a young adult and I had a priest on our college campus who was quite gentle.
1338. When it's over.
1339. When I've finally had the courage to face and acknowledge a longstanding area of sin in my life with a confessor who understood the significance of my effort, who didn't minimize my accountability, and who offered common sense counsel as well as compassion.
1340. Recent experiences where the priest has demonstrated true compassion and nonjudgmental reflection. The priest sat and talked with me for quite some time about

many things. This priest usually does that in the confessional for anyone. He doesn't rush anyone out.

1341. I had been away from the sacrament for more than ten years, because we used contraception in our marriage (and have three children) and did not believe this is a sin. The priest was wonderful in discussing this with me.
1342. My best experiences were feelings of a lifted spirit and renewed joy, truly feeling forgiven and closer to God. That mostly happened when I was younger.
1343. When a priest is able to give me a different perspective. It helps a lot.
1344. A direct counseling on an issue that was between Jesus and me.
1345. When the priest actually responded to my confession of sins.
1346. Feeling forgiveness after having confessed.
1347. When I know my confessor and he knows me: the mutuality of friendship.
1348. Feeling forgiven.
1349. Sitting face-to-face with a priest who was the first to give me advice on how to do better during reconciliation. There was no judgment but complete understanding. This led me to feel loved and accepted by God. True reconciliation with God occurred.
1350. Encountering priests who have empathy, kindness, and integrity.
1351. The act of forgiveness, restoration to God's grace and acceptance back into the church's family.
1352. When there is plenty of time and the priest is empathetic.
1353. With priests I knew and trusted, who were spiritually on the same page or at least in the same book.
1354. A feeling of peace and tranquility.
1355. I became Catholic in RCIA in 2004 just to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to avoid perdition!
1356. Compassionate confessors who spend some time with me.
1357. Coming back to confession. The priest was so calming.
1358. Several times at various locations, priests have offered me encouragement as it relates to God's love and forgiveness.
1359. When the priest and I have a talk about what led me to sin and how I can make changes in my life.
1360. The ones in which the priest showed understanding and compassion.
1361. All of them.
1362. A priest who was truly interested in how I can go forward.
1363. Where the priest and I connect. There's no judgment but mutual respect.
1364. To be heard.
1365. Wonderful priests who listen and make prayerful comments and recommendations.
1366. When the priest call me by name.
1367. When the priest stood up and placed his hands on my head during absolution.
1368. I have a regular confessor; he knows things I struggle with and he knows the circumstances of my life. Confession with him is like a therapy session, and I'm grateful for how this makes me better. Other priests from his society are very similar, and I first confessed with them after not going to confession for about ten years. I was blown away with the dialogue and how they listened during confession, and I remember that first time finishing confession with such a profound understanding of myself.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 1369. Total mercy.
- 1370. Feeling heard, loved and forgiven.
- 1371. When the priest understands that the reason I may be doing things is because I'm human and not a horrible person.
- 1372. Having someone to listen.
- 1373. Coming back to confession after 30 years, I chose a priest I knew would be compassionate and he was. Another experience is when I went to a different church and someone welcomed me and showed me round, gave me a hymn book and showed me the confessional, saying that father was there if I wanted confession. It was very moving that the man was offering me God's grace in that way. I hadn't expected to go to confession but I did. The best welcome to a church ever! And when I spoke to the priest, it was clear that was normal for the parish.
- 1374. Feeling the weight or burden of sin lifted off my shoulders.
- 1375. Being heard and understood about my lived experience, without judgment on the part of the confessor.
- 1376. Face-to-face in reconciliation room or office, when I felt the priest understood what I was saying and assured me of God's mercy.
- 1377. Conversations with priests, who are positive with me, and nonjudgmental.
- 1378. A caring and compassionate priest.
- 1379. I have had many great experiences in Confession over the last few years since I have been more regularly receiving the Sacrament.
- 1380. When I was met with understanding.
- 1381. My first Spiritual Director helped me immeasurably. Confessions were sometimes in his car after we had driven around talking. He was a new priest and leading a young adults group. Up to age 35 I think. I was one of the older ones in the group. He was present. He was smart. He was caring. He was a true teacher in that young adult group. He was compassionate. I was a Catechist. I learned so much and from this young priest. I did my 12-step program general confession with him, hence lots of time driving around in car. This happened obviously before all the sexual abuse scandals. He was a friend to many. That mattered.
- 1382. A peaceful feeling of having been forgiven my sins
- 1383. When my penance pertained to my sins. Along with prayer.
- 1384. When priests take their time to listen, to have a conversation with me and talk to me like an adult.
- 1385. Peaceful respite
- 1386. When a priest helps me to see my relationship with God differently. Once my priest told me to say the Our Father penance to God as if he was my dad. I never knew my dad growing up, and realized I never spoke to my own father, and perhaps this was why it was easier to speak to Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Mary.
- 1387. In a quiet church in a confessional.
- 1388. Penance that have challenged me, with a priest who cares.
- 1389. Fear, shame, embarrassment.
- 1390. A deep relationship with my confessor that allows me to be vulnerable.
- 1391. Affirmation of God's love for me.

1392. I'm grateful that I've had almost entirely positive experiences. Overall, I appreciate when a priest asks about my family (within context) and empathizes that raising a big family presents unique struggles.
1393. When the priests have been compassionate, forgiving, nonjudgmental, and extremely welcoming of my presence.
1394. My best experiences have been during a directed retreat.
1395. In Jesuit high school during a Kairos retreat
1396. When they are short and sweet.
1397. Feeling as though I was really being listened to but not judged.
1398. Confessing with the Fathers of Mercy in Kentucky. The room was soundproof and I could speak in a normal voice. The priest was behind a metal screen in a separate room. I was very relaxed as I have some anxiety issues.
1399. When I confess in a communal penance service. I love that we can pray together and prepare for the sacrament in the presence of others like we did at my Christ Renewals retreat.
1400. Once in confession I confessed an intimate relationship that I had been struggling with. No one knew of that relationship. That person died suddenly. The priest asked me how I was doing. That priest's compassionate response touched me so deeply. I felt comforted and forgiven.
1401. I had been away from the Church for more than 20 years and confessed to everything I had done wrong, and was softly crying in shame. The priest said many beautiful things about my contrition that made me feel whole again.
1402. Being forgiven.
1403. Being met with compassion and understanding.
1404. With priests who are openly loving and willing to give advice going forward, who are not in a hurry but to the point.
1405. Finding a sympathetic ear.
1406. I have had wonderfully compassionate priests at difficult times in my life who were able to encourage me without dismissing my sin or rubbing it in my face. They were very fatherly and warm.
1407. Face-to-face with a priest I do not know. Anonymity gives me courage.
1408. Being with confessors I know or with whom I work.
1409. The priest had a sense of humor!
1410. When a priest actually took the time to give me guidance and give a penance that was meaningful, and not so some canned statement like to say x-many Hail Marys.
1411. When the Priest and I had a discussion. When he saw me for being me and reminded me that God loves me.
1412. When I was a young woman, I did something terrible and was wracked with guilt. My previous experiences with confession had been very punitive and just made me feel worse. This time I saw a kind, humble Jesuit who expressed God's love for me and helped me understand that my guilt showed a desire to be true to what I knew to be right. He gave me absolution and I cried with relief. It changed my life.
1413. When my penance is more clearly tied to my sin, I feel that is more meaningful.
1414. When a priest asks me to do a corporal act of mercy instead of just praying three Hail Marys.
1415. When I can see spiritual growth, when a priest provides clarity and comfort.

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1416. The priest explained the impact of my sins on others. He helped me to understand and to change. He reminded me I am the face of God to others. This helps me be kinder and more loving.
1417. I had a priest who listened intently, pondered my confession, and provided a thoughtful insight into how I can be better. I felt so happy to have had that experience.
1418. There was a priest of Opus Dei I went to who had, in my words, an anointing of compassion. I knew that I could say anything, even my most shameful sins and that Jesus would forgive me.
1419. I often go to the retired priests. The experience is peaceful and warm, in a sacramental way. I feel welcome and closer to God.
1420. The priest had the same experience I had had with family members and shared with me lessons on how to forgive.
1421. We wrote our sins on a slip of paper. We brought it up to our pastor, with his arm around us, he forgave and counseled us and then burned all the slips of paper. Powerful!
1422. Completing a penance that was what I truly needed.
1423. My first time back after being gone from the church for a long time was amazing. The priest helped me through it as I didn't know what to say, and then was so encouraging and happy I was there.
1424. Communal reconciliation.
1425. Face-to-face confession.
1426. My husband was killed in Iraq. The Westboro Baptist protestors came to his funeral with signs that said "Thank God for IEDs" and other horrible things. Although I was able to forgive the people who killed my husband by detonating that IED, I struggled for years to forgive these protestors and their hateful signs. I went to Confession three times as I struggled to forgive, but knew I was holding onto so much hate. The first time I confessed that I was struggling with a lack of forgiveness, the priest said that if I had made the decision to forgive them I had already forgiven them, but that didn't feel satisfying when I still felt so much anger and hate. Months later, the next priest told me that my anger was hurting me, but was not hurting the protestors, which I knew to be true, but it did not change how I felt. Months after that, when I was still struggling with my failure to forgive, the third priest was quiet and then said, "What an awful thing they have done." And as soon as he said that, I felt the anger and hatred whoosh out of me. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest (and God) helped me to forgive and let go of that pain. Up until that point, it had been difficult to think or talk about the protestors without feeling my throat constrict, my heart pound, my face flush. After that experience in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, those physical symptoms were gone. It felt a healing. I finally understood that I had forgiven them. I don't think I could have gotten there without that priest's help during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Maybe I needed all three of those priests' messages at different times, but it was hearing that third priest say what an awful thing they had done that somehow allowed my heart to let go of all that anger I was holding onto.
1427. When I have celebrated the sacrament with a confessor who knows me as a person outside the sacrament.
1428. The priests who encourage and understand human frailty. Most priests really show the love of Christ.

1429. A priest who allowed me to pour out my heart, which helped to heal the pain of my sins.
1430. Absolution. Instruction. Guidance. And a hug at the end.
1431. My best experience was sitting in the living room of the confessor and, within confession, having a rambling conversation of failings before receiving absolution..
1432. My best experience in confession was with a really smart priest whose insight I respected, who confidently followed the script (so I knew what to expect), really heard me, offered relevant Scripture to pray with, offered comfort, and told me I had made a good confession.
1433. Hearing the hard truth, which gave me the courage I need to persevere.
1434. Going to a priest that puts his stole over your head when you are saying the Act of Contrition.
1435. Quick assistance with the examination of conscience led to a deeper calling and commitment to avoid certain sins.
1436. After decades away from the church, on Cursillo, I was the only person there with no parish or church involvement. I sat in confession with a priest who invested his completely unrushed time in truly hearing and understanding. He treated it like a conversation, relaxed and safe. He apologized for how the church treated me as a younger woman. He reflected back to me in a way that was genuine, direct, personal, showed understanding, and was welcoming. He never said anything judgmental or critical about my leaving the practice of the faith for a while but instead affirmed my faith journey and my spiritual development outside the church during those decades. He told me it was obvious to him that I left the church but never left God. He is why I came back, why I tried to find a parish. My parish priest has taken the time to know me, and in the context of his caring I eventually talked about an early life event that I had never shared but from which I carried pain, guilt, and shame. He listened carefully and then he told me that what I was carrying was not my sin; the sin belonged to another. When I looked up, I saw he had tears in his eyes. Those tears, that expression of empathy, of humanity, shattered something in me. It opened the possibility for my trusting someone and trusting God in a different way. He is why I stayed in the church. I am now a lector, am on the parish council, attend our daily outdoor rosary meeting and am leading a collaboration team. With my pastor penance has always been incredibly meaningful. Most often he has suggested scripture passages, or specific psalms that relate directly to what we talked about. I may have learned something, but more often I felt the text was continuing to grow the reconciliation conversation into greater meaning and deeper understanding.
1437. Just feeling that I am in the presence of God and trying to become closer to the God.
1438. Feeling connected to God.
1439. Feeling free and protected by our Lord.
1440. I once confessed a sin from years ago and I had many explanations as to why I had committed the sin. The priest told me it was forgiven and now I was to forget about it and move on. He also once told me not to go digging into my past to find very old sins. He explained that we grow and change and our perception of sin matures.
1441. When I properly prepare and reflect before going into the confessional. Reflecting on the upcoming Sunday's readings and how they connect with my life. Invariably, Jesus

and the Gospel writers are speaking directly to me, which gives me great courage to face my sins head on.

1442. A younger confessor, who might have been fresh out of seminary or a few years out, when I was in high school, treated me with such respect, tenderness, and true goodwill that I could feel the love of God in the space. I still remember that he gave me a penance but also recommended that I practice "gratitude and awe of God. Respectful awe of God, recognition that He is omnipotent and you are not in charge. Not trembling fear that God is going to smite you. Just a healthy awe." It's almost 15 years later and I still remember that confession. I was treated like a person with real spiritual needs and a deep interior life. I felt seen by God.
1443. The more informal way of talking face-to-face.
1444. Feeling the emotional weight lifted from my soul.
1445. The priest speaking to me on my level and giving me a prayer card.
1446. I had a conversation once with a priest about frustration and anxiety in confession that I'll never forget.
1447. With a priest who really listened and felt my pain and shame, and offered love, kindness and forgiveness.
1448. When my penance aligns with my struggles and sins.
1449. The priest overrode my wife and said there was nothing wrong with reading the Bible at Mass if I didn't understand the language (Spanish Masses).
1450. The times when the priest really showed me Christ's mercy.
1451. When a priest helps me to trust in God and to have peace as I go forward.
1452. With priests who show compassion, empathy.
1453. My best experiences are when I can actually ask a question or two about my understanding of something I've been dealing with and whether or not it is a sin.
1454. When the priest gave a concrete suggestion to overcome a particular sin.
1455. Relief of shame and anxiety.
1456. Where the priest listens patiently, offers wise counsel, even prays with me, and suggests trying a different approach to fight the temptation.
1457. When a priest said to look for joy in the Blessed Mother.
1458. Priests who allow me to give some context. Priests who remind me of God's love and mercy. Priests who make me smile. I was so happy that some priests held outdoor Confessions during the pandemic. How generous!
1459. Being raised from the dead is an infinitely good experience!
1460. Talking with a priest whom I knew also as friend for a couple of hours.
1461. Face-to-face with priests I know who are interested in my life.
1462. When the priest tells me that I've made a good confession. Also, when I'm discouraged about my sinfulness and the priest encourages me to put it behind me and start fresh.
1463. The advice I have been given when I am struggling in a particular area.
1464. Help to focus on improving family relationships.
1465. One of my favorite confessors always gave the same penance: pray for the sick. It felt to me as though this elevated absolution.
1466. Once when struggling with a repetitive sin, the priest told me to envision my spiritual armor as a knife and each time I use it to fight the temptation the knife will become sharper and thus it'll be easier to slice through the temptation (meaning that the

temptation will get weaker over time and so become easier to resist). I never committed that sin again.

1467. When I know the priest personally, there's an added level of comfort that he knows me and what is going on in my life.
1468. Before absolution a priest asked me "to look into the dark areas of my heart and find ways I can cooperate with God's grace to make them bright." It was a powerful insight into my role in making a good confession and changing.
1469. The times when I brought a written list and was thorough.
1470. Going to the same Confessor over a period of years. He got to know me, and more importantly understood and guided my journey. I miss him!
1471. Being reminded that God's love is bigger and His mercy greater than any sin we could ever commit.
1472. When the Priest told me to let go of my guilt.
1473. The feeling of healing.
1474. Knowing that Jesus is merciful is such a beautifully freeing gift!
1475. A confessor was transformed into Jesus for me and prophesied. It preceded a miraculous experience that changed my life.
1476. Most recently I went to a Franciscan friar who set up two armchairs facing each other and listened intently to all my worries and concerns. He treated me with great kindness and respect.
1477. Penance Services that included individual Reconciliation.
1478. With priests I have had spiritual direction with as well; the personal connection has made the confession be less rushed and more personal.
1479. When it has seemed casual, not formal, nonjudgmental, and supportive advice has been given.
1480. Experiencing justice and then feeling God's mercy,
1481. Feeling relief at confessing things that weigh on my mind and receiving absolution for these things without condescending judgment.
1482. When it is a conversation with the confessor, reflecting on God's mercy.
1483. When my penance was to think about all the things I had done right. Another was when I was advised to remember and meditate on the risen Christ after discussing a particularly painful experience. He said the wounds will always be there, but what happened was in the past and would not happen again.
1484. Once the priest gave me the penance of going out of my way to help someone. It took me a while to determine action on my part was worthy to fulfill the mission.
1485. When the priest actually listened and was wise enough to ask questions that I needed to answer.
1486. The remarkable knowledge that no matter how deep my sins go, no matter how often I fail to stamp them out, that God's ability to forgive is greater than my ability to sin.
1487. I habitually went to confession when I was addicted to pornography and desires of the flesh. And through many sessions, and much patience on the part of priests, I am sober and clean.
1488. A conversation with the priest discussing situations I faced and decisions or behaviors I feel concerned about.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1489. I went to reconciliation once on an eight day silent retreat. The priest I met with had plenty of time, and the whole thing was more a natural conversation than I'd ever experienced before.
1490. Brief. Kind confessor. Nonjudgmental.
1491. When a priest affirmed that my thoughts on social issues are okay.
1492. The kindness of the priest and occasionally his humor.
1493. Confession during retreat. Not so rushed.
1494. A priest who was amazingly kind, despite being half deaf, who wanted to make Christ present to me. He listened and spoke from his heart.
1495. With my current pastor. He has a good understanding of me. He is a prayerful but humorous confessor. His penance is very helpful. I have now learned to see Christ in the person of the priest.
1496. Compassionate listening.
1497. As a caregiver, I was upset about the things that I was unable to do. The priest pointed out that there are some things I can do and some things that I can't do and that doesn't make me a bad person.
1498. When the priest shares with me examples of what to do.
1499. Feeling of sincerity.
1500. The feeling of freedom from guilt. Knowing that I can continue on my road of life free from my sins.
1501. Face-to-face in a priest's office.
1502. When it's difficult to say a sin and the priest helps by asking questions and exudes the love and mercy of God.
1503. A kind priest who helped me confess properly without judgment.
1504. My best experience was when I went back for the first time after being away for about twenty years. My absence wasn't from fear or disillusion, but because our parish switched to Communal Penance in the late 70s. When parishes began going back to individual confessions, I was afraid I wouldn't know what to do. Plus I had a ton of stuff to confess; drugs in college, cohabitation before marriage, stuff like that. When I finally got the guts to go, Father was so gentle and beautiful. My penance was just to thank God for the gift of my faith. So. Much. Grace.
1505. Priests who are kind but who don't easily let me off the hook.
1506. Many good experiences when priests have made themselves available on short notice.
1507. When a priest made me feel welcomed by God.
1508. When the priest is able to help me understand how I can relate to God and his love in the circumstances I present.
1509. My best experience was my first confession during RCIA. After confessing all my sins from the previous 27 years, my penance was one Our Father. It was the most beautiful image of grace that I've ever experienced.
1510. Usually in places other than my parish, with an unknown priest, getting fresh comments and advice.
1511. There are so many good experiences that it's hard to single out just one. Mostly I am amazed at just being listened to so intently. Such a time-out-of-time experience. God is always so present in the confessional. There are three of us in there.
1512. Peace from the confession.
1513. When I've gone face-to-face.

1514. When the priest has made me feel less guilty and less anxious through compassionate words.
1515. When the priest has reassured me that I am forgiven, and not awful, and given me a penance that calls for action, not repeating prayers.
1516. A priest who told me over and over how much God loves me while I wept.
1517. Two. When my former pastor welcomed me back to the faith after 10 or 12 years away. And when another priest gave me as penance to pray for a woman battling cancer that he had just visited that day or the day before.
1518. When I've had an attentive priest and dialogue
1519. When I've met understanding and received confidence to move forward in life with self and others.
1520. I have a severe anxiety disorder. Confession is a major trigger. I'm close to my priest as a friend, which makes it hard but also better. At the same time, I couldn't go to anyone else. I have had panic attacks in confession, and he has always helped me greatly. He doesn't judge me and just sits with me as I go through the process. My longest confession ever was 40 minutes. I confessed most of my small sins in the first 5-10 minutes, but there was a big, embarrassing sin I was ashamed of. The priest helped me for thirty minutes while I kept trying to get it out. Eventually I did get it out, but I don't know how many other priests would be willing to do that. I consider myself so blessed to have the amazing priest I do. I know most people are nervous to go to Confession, but when you have an anxiety disorder, it's another story. I have panic attacks before Confession, thinking about Confession, and while in Confession. My priest's patience, personal touch, talking to me like I'm an old friend (as we are friends), and his Christ-like love make all the difference. I wish every priest was like that.
1521. After a long absence from confession, the sense of calm and freedom.
1522. At abbeys where appointments can be made and more time taken.
1523. A priest guided by the Spirit was given knowledge of my heart beyond what I confessed. The Holy Spirit spoke to me and the Priest was open to the gift and nudge.
1524. I have had one experience that I can say was the best. The priest listened and focused on me.
1525. Communal penance services.
1526. A priest who asked me about a small sin that I cannot seem to overcome. He then reminded me that God loves me and wants to help me overcome it, suggesting how God might be leading me toward change.
1527. After being away for a long, long, long time, a Paulist priest in confession made sure to tell me that all of my sins would be forgiven whether I remembered to say every one or not. It was a wonderful re-entry to Church.
1528. Being consoled by the priest. Relief after the reconciliation, knowing that I can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
1529. When it helped me get through some difficult times.
1530. Behind a screen and frequent.
1531. Priests who actually listen, and dig a little to help me fully disclose my sins.
1532. When the priest treated my failings compassionately, yet with an expectation that I could do better.
1533. Being freed of guilt.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1534. When the priest through the Holy Spirit was able to pin point the core sin and then remind me of who I am.
1535. When I received reassurance as I was doubting life decisions and whether I had made mistakes.
1536. Friendly priests who also make good suggestions.
1537. Surrendering to God's will and knowing that he has blessed me.
1538. I am gay. The priest made me feel better about myself. He also said Jesus loves me. He also told me that if I'm sad, then others would see that and not want to be Catholic. It made me feel much better. I had wanted to kill myself.
1539. When I was welcomed back to church after being gone for many years.
1540. Two years ago, I went to confession for the first time in 25 years. I confessed a very serious sin and my priest could not have been kinder or more compassionate. I truly felt the joy of God over a repentant sinner.
1541. When the confessor has engaged in an actual conversation and human interaction. It is so much more fruitful than when he says, "Is that all? There anything else?"
1542. When the priest is genuinely merciful.
1543. A few years ago, during a Holy Week reconciliation service at a retreat center, I wasn't even sure I wanted to go. Then kind of at the last minute I decided to do it, with a priest I'd spoken with before during the retreat and who I really liked. What was so surprising and wonderful about it was that I felt so deeply heard and seen. The quality of attention he gave me as a listener was such a gift. I felt so respected and valued because of the intensity of his listening that I decided to try to give other people that level of attention when I was talking to them, too. His idea for a penance, the Prayer of St. Francis, struck me as so utterly perfect that I decided to pray it every day in my morning prayer time, and I think I did that for almost a year, and it made a huge difference in my ability to see opportunities to be a bringer of peace, faith, hope, etc. as I went through my day.
1544. During one confession, the priest said, "It takes time to heal." We were speaking of the residue left from sins of years ago. I felt so relieved and felt he understood my pain. It was a piece of consolation I could not give to myself, but he gave me the consolation I did not know I needed!
1545. Priests who are very gentle and kind with their responses and don't make you feel worse than you already feel
1546. I love my parish priest, who has always listened with patience, warmth and a kind heart to all my confessions. My load feels so much lighter and with joy I pick up my cross and carry it through life's daily struggles. He always reminds us how much God loves us, and how we, in turn, can spread the Gospel through our actions, not just words, so others can feel his love, too.
1547. My best experiences have been when the priest asked follow up questions or suggested additional resources outside of the confessional (once a priest suggested therapy, another time a priest referred me to some community resources). Also there was once I went to confession for something I probably didn't need to confess from a strictly moral perspective, but it was weighing heavily upon me. The priest likened my situation a biblical circumstance (Jesus flipping the tables of the money lenders) and asked follow up questions to help me understand why the situation was bothering me (it helped me understand the root cause).

1548. When I feel the burden of sin lifted from me.
1549. During my few confessions as a child, when I felt totally forgiven.
1550. When I came back to church after being away for a few years the priest took time, read from the Bible the stories of the prodigal son and the woman at the well. It was a beautiful experience.
1551. When I've received quick advice from the priest.
1552. Face-to-face with a priest I know.
1553. Our parish has communal penance services, followed by individual confession
1554. Other than my first Reconciliation, I'd say the time the priest told me about a Catholic organization of psychology so I could get therapy from someone not hostile to my faith.
1555. Got a hug after crying and not going to confession in years.
1556. When my sins were bigger and I left forgiven.
1557. A priest who offered brief counseling or guidance. He was very compassionate and understanding. I felt like he cared that I felt understood.
1558. When a priest was available outside of the typical thirty minutes before Mass on a Saturday evening. It was clear that he wanted to be there, and made time to hear my confession.
1559. Knowing that God knows I am not perfect.
1560. When I have received advice in a way that is applicable.
1561. When I've gone to confession during my time in spiritual direction.
1562. When I've had understanding priests. It's nice to hear that it's a good confession.
1563. Face-to-face with a priest I know and trust.
1564. When I met a caring and understanding voice when I was going through a divorce.
1565. Feeling like I was heard
1566. When the priest shared his own struggles and humanity with me.
1567. Receiving absolution and a blessing.
1568. Sharing what worked in a difficult situation I had just confessed.
1569. When the penance I was given was an act of service.
1570. Ones that were a dialogue, where not only did I experience forgiveness, but I left having received some spiritual direction.
1571. Whenever a priest is present, attentive, curious, and questioning. When he gives guidance with understanding while redirecting.
1572. When the priest has been honest with how serious sin is, offers real advice, exudes confidence in his ministry and the power of the sacrament, and asks me to pray for him at the end.
1573. Years ago with spiritual directors who were priests. They knew me.
1574. Hearing how my behavior is common and part of the human experience and receiving an explanation on how Jesus wants to use the experience to bring me closer to him.
1575. One time I mentioned some, "If I had done this, then I might have done that" scenarios and the priest stopped me and told me not to worry about or feel guilty for mistakes or sins that never happened.
1576. The joy of being forgiven, knowing that the love of Jesus extended is immense.
1577. As a young, single person navigating the dating world, I expressed a concern that Church teachings are somewhat vague on physical expressions of affection outside of intercourse, and while I was sure I had sometimes been sinful for discernible reasons

such as selfishness, I was not always clear about how to discern the morality of my relationships. The priest was patient, understanding, and helpful. He not only put me at ease by assuring me of God's forgiveness, but helped me to trust in God's continuing mercy as I navigated such relationships going forward. He was incredibly helpful to a guilt-ridden young Catholic in a world where dating norms are decidedly not rooted in Christian ideals. In short, my best experiences have both assured me of God's forgiveness and mercy, and helped me grow closer to God in my life going forward.

1578. Talking face-to-face with my confessor!
1579. Good conversations with caring priests and penances that related to my needs.
1580. A confessor commended me for my compassionate heart and suggested seeking out spiritual direction.
1581. When the confessor is gentle, truthful and offers insight.
1582. The times when my confessor helps me see all sides of my actions, not just the part where I mess up and sin.
1583. When there were no reproaches, no focus on guilt but rather on potential and love.
1584. When the priest is patient, kind and listens well.
1585. When the confessor is gentle.
1586. Getting questions answered, getting good advice, receiving attention and quality time when discussing more complex situations.
1587. When I realized I really was sorry for offending God and just not happy to be forgiven.
1588. When I've received understanding and simple forgiveness, not a lecture or analysis.
1589. I've had a few priests in my lifetime say, "That was a very good confession." I don't know why but it made me feel better.
1590. At my current parish, because the pastor has experience and actually believes in the Gospel of Mercy.
1591. When the priest really listens closely when I am telling him about a difficult problem and gives me good, helpful advice.
1592. When the priest was compassionate, kind, and encouraging.
1593. Communal penance services when we are led through an examination of conscience with quiet time to pray and then confess.
1594. When the priest said to say prayers for another person as part of my penance.
1595. Talking with a priest about my struggles to forgive my mother.
1596. A priest's empathy, humor and kindness.
1597. When a priest asks questions to clarify what I have confessed and helps me to better understand how I can live better.
1598. A priest who was a deep, authentic listener who gave sound, appropriate, merciful counsel.
1599. I love face-to-face confession.
1600. The kindness of the listening priest who prioritized not a list of wrongs, but a conversation of desiring and asking for forgiveness.
1601. Whenever I experience God's mercy concretely through the priest's compassionate and prayerful conversation with me.

1602. Whenever the priest provided Bible passages as my penance and to reflect on them. Those passages always speak to my heart and they teach me what I need to learn at that given time.
1603. When the priest is not in a rush and is visibly listening and having a dialogue with me.
1604. When I had had surgery on my leg, our parish priest came to my house to hear my confession and give me Communion. It gave me such comfort.
1605. With a monk at an Abbey. It felt like I was sitting across from Jesus. I was listened to, heard, and loved.
1606. Being told it was normal to experience bad, angry, hateful feelings.
1607. One of my best experiences happened when I was 16 when a priest did not dismiss my questions about sexuality or take advantage of the situation.
1608. Having a spiritual director who understood my anxiety around confession and worked around it.
1609. Someone who was a deep, authentic listener who then gave sound, appropriate, merciful counsel.
1610. Being able to confess to priest you feel comfortable with and who sometimes gives advice.
1611. After 17 years not going, I found a nice priest, went to confession, and felt relieved.
1612. I've had the best experiences of forgiveness in spiritual direction.
1613. Face-to-face with Franciscan friars who let me take all the time I need and engage in conversation with me.
1614. When I've gone with a happy priest.
1615. When the priest is a sensitive and thoughtful listener and focuses on communicating God's forgiveness and love.
1616. When a short counseling session (one minute) helps me focus on what I need to do better.
1617. During an outdoor retreat, the confessor took a walk with me so confession felt more like a conversation.
1618. When the priest talks to me and does not act like a robot.
1619. When I did something wrong, knew it was wrong at the time and truly felt bad about it. And was forgiven.
1620. My pastor prays the Divine Mercy Chaplet as he hears confession. Heaven opens up. No doubt that Jesus is there with us.
1621. I made a confession to a loving welcoming priest at a retreat center near us. He was so welcoming and made me feel comfortable.
1622. Priests who listened carefully and offered a prayer resource – in other words went he beyond the mechanics of the rite and said more than “for your penance say three Hail Marys.”
1623. During my yearly retreats at a Jesuit retreat house.
1624. A sense of grace when the priest is gentle and kind.
1625. With a priest, now gone to God, with whom it was always an act of worship, with compassionate dialogue.
1626. When the priest has said words of assurance emphasizing God's divine mercy.
1627. I went to a Cardinal without knowing who he was. It was a real prayerful spiritual experience.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1628. The lighter feeling of being forgiven.
1629. When I've received advice about living my life closer to God.
1630. When the priest affirmed that God still loves me.
1631. On a retreat chaperoning youth. The priest seem more in tune and gentle with those of us who have anxiety or other mental health issues.
1632. When the priest empathized with me
1633. When the "penance" was related to what I was asking for reconciliation about.
1634. Every absolution is the best! There's a level at which the rest doesn't matter. But I think confessions when I was a teenager were the most impactful. They have stuck with me and I am almost 40.
1635. A priest asked about a recurring problem I described, where do you think this is coming from? He helped me to see that it would be far to fix the problem without fixing the cause.
1636. Leaving feeling lighter than air!
1637. When the priests treats you as a person, show they care and understand your troubles. One priest in particular helped me see how my actions were reasonable in the situations I was in, but also helped guide me.
1638. Casual, in a parking lot.
1639. With a priest at Georgetown. We ended up walking the parish grounds at sunset. It was my first reconciliation in over 20 years. He was kind and welcoming. The penance was thoughtful and led to a very heartwarming prayer experience.
1640. A priest who was a compassionate listener
1641. Being known and loved.
1642. After not going to confession for years, my first time back felt like a weight was lifted.
1643. At Communal services with songs, readings and prayers prior to individual confession.
1644. I had a priest I knew well who would listen and always end with telling me how much Jesus loves me and forgives me entirely.
1645. When the confessional was being worked on, I was asked if I would like to take a walk and talk. It was very refreshing.
1646. A couple of times, the priest has given me a prayer or novena or litany that I was not familiar with, which was very helpful.
1647. Feeling understood.
1648. The confessions when I don't feel like a number, where the priest listens, takes his time and gives good thought provoking help and guidance and a penance that is personal and relates to the situations shared.
1649. Then times I left feeling better than I went in, unburdened.
1650. Confessing to a pleasant, caring, compassionate priest who doesn't judge and reminds me that I'm loved by God always!
1651. When I've been met with warmth, understanding, and indications that the priest is really listening.
1652. When the priest and I have a conversation.
1653. With a nonjudgmental priest who understands intent versus action.
1654. A priest recently told me to "Trust God and say, 'I love you Jesus,'" which are basic but profound statements.
1655. When the priest related to what I was confessing.

1656. I had confessed pornography use to a priest several times. He suggested that there might be a deeper problem and recommended a therapist. The therapist really helped me clarify my problem and look for solutions.
1657. A sit down face-to-face with confessor with a real conversation
1658. When the priest stood to welcome me and shook my hand. He was pastoral and offered sound advice.
1659. Feeling listened to.
1660. When the confessor showed a genuine sense of compassionate healing, which can be time-consuming.
1661. My priest was kind and patient.
1662. A priest who really took the time to listen.
1663. When a priest gave me simple, gentle words of encouragement and a reminder of how great God's love is.
1664. Priests who have been engaged, kind, understanding, and nonjudgmental.
1665. On retreat, where confession can be more a spiritual conversation.
1666. When there's no hurry to get in and get done, and I can speak and discuss.
1667. My first one at 55 years old. The priest was so kind and provided good advice.
1668. When I went this past Lent. The priest was so caring and understanding and made me feel that I was still a worthwhile person.
1669. I have been blessed never to have had a bad experience, although I have friends who tell me awful stories. All the priests to whom I have confessed have exceeded my expectations for mercy and absolution.
1670. Face-to-face confession when sometimes particular is weighing on my heart.
1671. A loving, kind and merciful priest, who gives advice on how to grow in love and virtue.
1672. When the priest has conveyed mercy and not judgment.
1673. When I receive encouragement not to give up! My experiences are generally good. I think priests are usually at their best in the confessional.
1674. Being old, when my sins were forgiven.
1675. When I went face-to-face in priest's office
1676. During group reconciliation services.
1677. Face-to-face experiences are more comfortable for me because it gives me the sense of it being a conversation with Jesus, asking for his forgiveness. I recall my first reconciliation as a second grader where I went in with some apprehension (not face-to-face), but I came out feeling like my soul was "as shiny clean as a new penny." I remember saying that to my parents.
1678. When I have been encouraged to continue my journey as a disciple.
1679. When the priest behaved as a spiritual father, not condoning sin, but not condemning me.
1680. When my priest understood my choices within the context of my life, not some abstract utopia. And when he assured me that I am still loved by God no matter what.
1681. When I was in high school our Chaplain would hear confession while walking the track. It made it less intimidating.
1682. When a priest came to see me in a hospital.
1683. When a priest asked me as a young mom if I was getting enough sleep.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1684. When the penance was been tailored to the occasion and not just the same thing given to everybody.
1685. The first time I went in college, with a priest of the Brotherhood of Hope in Boston. I was a mess and sobbed the whole time. The priest was patient, kind, and reminded me that Jesus will not stop loving me for these things and how great it was that I was making an effort. He also gently walked me through the steps.
1686. A priest who knows me and challenges me to grow, who gives me a meaningful penance related to my confession.
1687. One priest offered to pray and fast for me the following Wednesday. I had never had that happen before.
1688. My best experience is seasonal private confession with a priest who is not my pastor.
1689. The warmth, expression of love and not judgment by a priest.
1690. Being able to say newer versions of the Act of Contrition.
1691. The priest hugging me and assuring me nothing I could ever do would ever separate me from God's love.
1692. When I confessed talking badly about a relative. The priest helped me think about how I would feel if the situation was reversed. At that moment I felt my heart open and I no longer had those negative thoughts about her and we're friends now.
1693. Having a weight taken off my shoulder after being absolved.
1694. When I've experienced, through the priest's words and attitude, God's love and acceptance no matter my sin.
1695. A priest spoke to me about God's mercy, looked me in the eyes and smiled as he prayed the prayer of absolution. It was like Jesus was looking at me.
1696. A priest once put his hands on my head while giving absolution. I felt a very strong sense of the Holy Spirit. Another time a priest told me, at the end, "Now go back into the Church and feel God's love for you."
1697. Face-to-face, empathetic conversations. It helps to have the confessor truly listen, sometimes challenge, and offer a penance that is not just the recitation of Hail Marys.
1698. When I confessed an extremely big sin. I was so nervous about it that I had been avoiding confession for years over. The priest didn't chastise me, didn't give advice or a big penance, just absolved me and told me to say one Hail Mary. I experienced so much grace and mercy in his not crucifying me over it.
1699. When a priest helped me understand that I am not 100% evil.
1700. When I've gotten compassion and advice on dealing with issues to move on in life.
1701. Being assured the God wasn't out to punish me.
1702. Meeting a gentle listener.
1703. When I have received a bit of spiritual counseling or spiritual direction.
1704. Mainly peace.
1705. A stepson ended up taking his life as a young adult. I felt guilty that I had not been more proactive in urging him to live with us as a teen instead of his mother. The priest really helped me to see that the suicide was not in any way my fault.
1706. I once had a theological chat with a priest I didn't know when considering returning to church. That led to confession and he gave me absolution despite uncertainty of how committed I was.
1707. When there is time to discuss.
1708. The peace I feel!

1709. When the priest said, "God loves you just the way you are." Or when another priest told me how powerful my medals of St Therese and Blessed Mother are.
1710. During my first confession 33 years after I was baptized. I'm a convert.
1711. When the priest helped me see the mercy of God in the sacrament.
1712. When the priest actually talks with me and finds the root of my sin instead of focusing on the symptoms.
1713. When I was made to feel truly forgiven. The priest was kind. He didn't make me feel bad, but instead made me feel human. I felt heard and respected. I was told God loves me. He told me he would pray for me for my challenging situation.
1714. Communal reconciliation services.
1715. I can think of three experiences after confessing the same habitual sin to the same priests. The priest stopped me and told me God loved me. He repeated it. He repeated it again. And I broke down in tears. A completely separate time he sternly but lovingly told me that I needed to love God more than I love this particular sin. And a third time, when I was so tired of confessing the same sin, he reminded me that Jesus fell three times with His cross, and so I shouldn't be surprised to fall with mine.
1716. When priest is really engaged and looks directly at you and listens intently waiting to speak until I'm finished.
1717. When I go more frequently than twice a year!
1718. Those that are simply conversational and understand that my sins are very human.
1719. With priests I don't know, so I can more easily be more honest.
1720. At those times in my life when I've been entering into a new life change. I'm sorry to say a gifted confessor helps!
1721. When a confession moved my husband and me to get our marriage convalidated by the Church. So many amazing graces have come from that. Our family (with 4 kids) is now a Catholic family that loves the Lord.
1722. When the priest showed happiness for my returning to church.
1723. When I was with my confessor in college.
1724. My best experiences have been the result of the sacrament feeling like a conversation, when the priest is comfortable enough to also talk me through the process, almost teaching.
1725. All good but one priest in particular makes me feel like I'm walking on air.
1726. When a priest addresses not only the sin I've confessed but also the underlying issue.
1727. I have had several really great experiences in "different" locations (under a tree beside a lake, during opportunities for Middle School and High School kids, at huge gatherings in a hotel ballroom with 25,000) and I really love it when I see so many young people receiving the sacrament. I was going, too, but just found the presence and participation of youth to be very uplifting.
1728. When the priest explains that we are human, what it means to be forgiven in God's eyes, and when we do not feel rushed.
1729. A priest who really listened and gave me some advice and a different way to look at the issues I was facing as well as a very meaningful penance.
1730. Having an open, loving response free of judgment, filled with welcoming and mercy.
1731. I really like receiving the sacrament face-to-face
1732. When the priest actually listens to me and offers advice and a way forward.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1733. A missionary bishop I knew – who was assassinated on his cathedral steps in 1989 – made me feel reconciled to an understanding and merciful God.
1734. Empathy and forgiveness
1735. I have been blessed with wonderful confessors but I must admit I pick them carefully. If a priest expresses or uses accusatory language from the pulpit, I avoid him.
1736. When I have felt listened to, when I was asked what was good about me. The priest showed a real interest in me as a person.
1737. I was given a novel penance, to do some readings.
1738. The times in which I have received particularly edifying clarity and counsel from the confessor.
1739. When the priest sounded genuinely interested in my spiritual life, not just running down the checklist.
1740. When I was in junior high and the priest helped me process the Watergate hearings.
1741. My best has been compassionate priests who took the time to discuss my weaknesses and sins.
1742. The feeling of relief and of guilt melting away.
1743. When a priest told me that marriage should not be hurtful and my spouse should not be abusive. I had confessed to a lack of patience with him, and the priest asked questions that led to that interchange. I later divorced and my marriage was annulled.
1744. With an empathetic priest.
1745. A priest's gentle encouragement.
1746. A priest who literally broke into a sweat. I was grappling with profound evil and he hung in there with me through it. He couldn't fix it but I felt seen and strengthened in my battles.
1747. The priest made suggestions or given a little advice.
1748. The priest sensed my wounded being and compassionately engaged my spirit.
1749. A priest who listened and provided some basic guidance.
1750. I've had some priests give me good and wholesome advice that has stuck with me.
1751. The priest prior for my first Confession was really good.
1752. The best experiences have been when intentional conversation has happened.
1753. When I complete my penance.
1754. My best experiences are when the Priest is easily communicated with, listens well, and advises appropriately.
1755. My best experience is when a priest offered to do my penance for me. He said he would pray for a week for me. I was blown away. On another occasion a priest was so gentle and shared that God understands what I've been through. He empathized with what I confessed in a non-awkward way. Another time, a priest spoke about what was the most awkward thing I had shared in confession in a way that was totally the opposite of shaming and said to trust that God has been at work in it all. It was so comforting!!!
1756. A kind priest who listens.
1757. The feeling of a new start, with lots of love from the Good Lord!
1758. Any confession in which the priest uses the correct words of absolution fills me with peace and gratitude.
1759. When the priest helped me to see that it was ok to have doubts about God.

1760. When a priest talked to me as if I were a friend. He empathized with my struggle and then gave me practical advice. Then he did the absolution. It felt like a loving conversation and was very supportive!
1761. The priest gave me a little bit of guidance on how to slowly remove the sin I was battling and get closer to God.
1762. I loved the open penitential and confession services.
1763. When I feel listened to and accepted, encouraged
1764. At a church in our city run by Redemptorists.
1765. When the priest pointed out that action that was overwhelming me wasn't actually a sin.
1766. When a priest took time to discuss my sins and challenges, not in exhaustive detail, but in enough detail to say something relevant, personal, and life-giving in the context of the confession.
1767. When the priest was patient and compassionate and really addressed the matters of confessional rather than listening, prescribing a rote penance, and sending me on my way.
1768. When I have felt loved and cared for, despite my weakness and sin.
1769. When a priest gave me good advice, not fluff, and then the feeling of joy and newness after being absolved.
1770. Priestly words of wisdom and of course absolution.
1771. Having a friendly, loving, gentle confessor who had great pastoral advice.
1772. When a priest is particularly insightful.
1773. I remember a warm and friendly priest who understood that I am a sinner and that I despise my sins and the damage they cause in my relationship with God. He empathized with me and gave me constructive advice on to how to deal with various situations that resulted in my sinning.
1774. My very best was my first confession after being away from the Church for twelve years. The priest stopped me when I said, "It has been twelve years since my last confession." He told me gently there was no need for me to be so worried about my list of sins. I was there at that moment, God loved me, and he would forgive all.
1775. The feeling of a fresh start.
1776. When the priest rejoices with me that my sins are forgiven
1777. When the priest was genuine and compassionate
1778. I truly feel God's mercy when I confess honestly.
1779. When my confessor was so understanding and helped me to forgive myself. Even though I know and accept God's forgiveness, I felt so unworthy.
1780. The freedom that comes with the sacrament. Nothing like it!
1781. Priests with patience.
1782. Always so happy to be forgiven.
1783. When the priest suggested that I look at what I was doing before I did my reoccurring sin. It helped.
1784. When I'm treated as an adult and not a child to be admonished, when the priest doesn't treat me as inferior.
1785. I appreciated a priest who seemed to understand I knew I sinned but I wasn't sure what the sin was or why it was a sin. His interest in my concern was helpful to get to the actual sin.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1786. I was once told in Reconciliation: "You must love everyone but you don't have to like everyone." That helped me a lot.
1787. A priest who praised God for my coming to the Sacrament after a long time. He made me feel welcome back.
1788. A priest who wasn't concerned with the ritual mechanics (though nothing was done contrary to the rite), but made it conversational and showed he understood, could relate.
1789. I went to church for the first time in months. All I could do was cry I was so overcome with emotion. Father just kept whispering, "Thank you! Thank you!"
1790. When I had to confess failures and a shameful sin, I was crying and pouring my heart out and being honest. The priest was so kind and thoughtful. He gave me good solid advice. Even though it was a difficult confession, it was probably the best one I've ever had.
1791. Being absolved before receiving the anointing of the sick before surgery a few months ago was a really powerful experience for me.
1792. When I received guidance, mentorship, and feedback on my experiences and why. My best experience was at confession in Lourdes, when I had a robust dialogue with my confessor.
1793. When I went back to confession for the first time after about fifteen years away from the Church, the priest responded by saying very warmly, "Well, first of all, welcome home." I was afraid of being judged for being a "bad Catholic," but his smile and kind words made me feel so welcomed and accepted.
1794. Many, many. I wasn't expecting such understanding and intuitive advice about marriage and teenage sons from a monk!
1795. When a priest told me it would probably be a good idea to spend time at my parents' house away from my controlling husband.
1796. My best reconciliation experiences are recent because I rediscovered the gift of regular attendance at Eucharistic Adoration. To quote Fr. Richard Rohr, "It takes about a year to get the junk out." It's impossible to not be real at Adoration.
1797. The best has been when the penance given was nontraditional. A memorable one was writing a letter and burning it. It makes the Sacrament feel less like a punishment and more like a cleansing experience.
1798. Going face-to-face after growing up before Vatican II.
1799. When my confessor disclosed some of his own personal struggles with prayer. This demystified the spiritual journey and vocation and helped me feel much closer to God. It also served as an antidote to attacks I get that I may not be "doing enough."
1800. My best experience, bar none, came after a lengthy confession of my sins when the priest simply said, "How happy is the Lord that you've come to His Father's house seeking His forgiveness."
1801. Priests who really listened closely and whose words were addressed specifically to me and the sins I had confessed.
1802. When I returned to the Catholic Church after many years away. That first Sacrament of Reconciliation upon returning was very meaningful.
1803. I love when priests are reassuring. When they use themselves or their lives as examples of how we all sin. It's comforting to know as well that they will be praying

for me and will be helping to atone for my sins through their prayer. Makes me feel less alone.

1804. Good advice even if it's difficult to hear, as long as it's done in love. I had a priest give me a personal used prayer card with a prayer to the Holy Spirit to help me overcome a specific sin and it worked!
1805. When the priest listens and doesn't talk his ear off.
1806. With priests who made time outside of the normal times for confession, or with priests who listened and were able to reflect back my concerns and give advice on how to avoid those sins.
1807. When I went to priests who listened and helped me find where I am trying to do good.
1808. When I could go regularly to an excellent confessor who had positive suggestions for spiritual growth.
1809. When I have found priests to be compassionate.
1810. When confession happens in the context of a larger conversation, like meeting with my Spiritual Director.
1811. When it's been a conversation and the priest asked how I was doing.
1812. When I confess to a priest who doesn't psychoanalyze me or tell me that what I'm confessing isn't a sin.
1813. When I told and consoled that God loved me.
1814. After being away from God and the church for over twenty years, I was reassured that I was still one of God's beloved daughters.
1815. When nonjudgmental, indeed non interventionist, priests made me comfortable to simply open and talk.
1816. When I was given a deep sense of peace through being understood and loved by God.
1817. The ones where I've been most honest and didn't feel rushed to confess all my sins.
1818. My best experiences are usually within the spiritual direction setting. We cover the good, the bad, what's working, what's going on in my spiritual life and what needs work.
1819. I had a priest ask to see my face (I was going anonymously) and he told me that God was a good Father who loved me and that I was worthy of forgiveness.
1820. When the priest gives guidance that is sound and based on Church teaching, rather than just something to make me feel good.
1821. With progressive priests who have a relational manner.
1822. When I made confession and my priest helped me see that I am not a bad person for making a bad choice.
1823. When I have received words of encouragement that I can be better by doing better.
1824. I think my best experience in reconciliation was when a priest authentically and in a heartfelt way comforted me over the difficulty I was facing. I told him that I had post partum depression so a lot of my sins (impatience and anger) stemmed from that. I could feel his empathy. He was so tender and gentle and it helped me forgive myself. Another time was the first time I went back in my twenties after a long time away. The priest rejoiced over my return. I was so nervous and his welcoming demeanor helped.
1825. The encouragement I have received. The referrals. Just realizing the priest wants to see me made whole.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1826. When it is quick.
1827. When I have had kind, clear speaking priest who have a realistic view of everyday family life.
1828. When priests help the Sacrament be true conversations with someone who understands my situation and can help me see clearly.
1829. Ones when I could feel real mercy. When the priest really seemed to listen.
1830. When it was a conversation about faith.
1831. My least uncomfortable confession was with an older, very kind priest who told me that as long as I didn't kill anyone that I was pretty okay.
1832. I had a priest who listed an extremely long list of sins. All I had to say is yes or no. It was great!
1833. I realized during confession in early 2019 that I am God's beloved daughter.
1834. The best experiences have been when I see my situation and sin in a different way so I can be brought to greater repentance.
1835. When a priest actually said, "welcome back!" This was after not being able to go very often! It was like Jesus was welcoming me back himself!
1836. When a priest actually listens and challenges me to be a better woman.
1837. When the priest has said something that I know is truly coming from God. One priest who after 8 years away from the sacrament told me to just tell Jesus I love him. The many priests who have said something small that was exactly what I needed at the time.
1838. When there's light in the room and the choice to sit or kneel. Also when the priest makes recommendations on how I should pray about a situation I've confessed.
1839. It was a wonderful conversation where he helped me by reviewing each of the commandments. This way I had time to think and it was not just a laundry list of sins. His questions helped me see my actions from a different perspective.
1840. Meeting Jesus and his mercy.
1841. The feeling of being free.
1842. When the priest said to me, "Welcome home." The best words ever!
1843. When the priest shared spiritual wisdom about an issue I had brought to confession.
1844. When the priest truly listens and doesn't seem rushed and offers a bit of wisdom and counsel.
1845. The counseling, the compassion and understanding of a nonjudgmental and non-condemning priest.
1846. On retreat at some significant moments of breakthrough in prayer or moments of conversion.
1847. With confessors who don't know my voice, because I have done some pretty stupid stuff.
1848. A priest who is present, offers advice, and always affirms and reminds me of God's love.
1849. Being able to go anonymously.
1850. When the priest is kind and gentle, but also expresses the need for repentance. I also appreciate when the priest gives recommendations of how to fight temptation in the area of sin I am struggling with.
1851. Honest caring by the priest.

1852. Going at the end of retreats that have given me something to think about: a motivation to do better, desire to be a saint and a lot of time and guidance to prepare for reconciliation.
1853. My recent return to the confessional after over fifty years reminded me that I am not as bad as I thought. Absolution is not a jail sentence!
1854. When it's been personal, face-to-face.
1855. I have been blessed to have gone to many amazing priests for confession. It is as though they can read my mind and can provide advice as well as absolution.
1856. The sense of relief and grace.
1857. During last Christmas season, the priest, while being very succinct, also made me feel heard and understood. He made me feel like I was coming out equipped to tackle sin.
1858. When a priest truly listens and offers a word that you know is from the Holy Spirit because it brings tears of healing.
1859. Those who truly listen and give a penance that is thoughtful and well suited to reparation and not just "in and out."
1860. The times when I didn't feel rushed and could really open up.
1861. When one priest help me to find the right way to follow God's will. That day still feels amazing in my heart.
1862. Being relieved of terrible guilt, experiencing love and receiving inspiration to be a better man.
1863. When the confessor genuinely and patiently listens to what I'm saying or trying to say.
1864. One priest is an amazing confessor, who listens patiently, offers advice and absolves my sins.
1865. Connection.
1866. The best experience of meeting Jesus in the Sacrament has been when the priest does not interrupt.
1867. When I did a full life confession to cover some things I wasn't sure were ever covered. It was very cleansing.
1868. When I was pleasantly surprised by the insights and caring of the priest.
1869. When I experience the feeling of love, mercy and forgiveness
1870. A priest who listens and is relatable.
1871. Encouragement
1872. After a complete spiritual inventory of shortcomings and victories, entering into the confessional and holding a discussion with Christ to express my shortfalls and intentions to reform.
1873. Feeling forgiven.
1874. When the father truly listens to us and gives real penances to repair or not fall into the same sin
1875. When the Priest talks to me and doesn't "preach."
1876. When the priest has acknowledged the gravity of my sins, yet expresses the mercy of God.
1877. When I feel mercy from the priest
1878. Where the priest says, "God has forgiven you and loves you."

*Merciful Like the Father*

1879. I returned to the Sacrament after more than twenty years. My confessor gave me as a penance read the Scripture verse of Jesus looking for his one lost sheep. It was wonderful.
1880. The feeling of forgiveness.
1881. When I receive Absolution.
1882. Once a priest told me I was being too hard on myself. I was a teenager at the time, so I particularly needed to hear this. Another time, the priest reminded me that my sins are behind me, and now I have the benefit of extra graces to help me going forward.
1883. When a priest reminded me sometimes the journey to growth can like like backwards movement in the moment but can truly growth in discernment.
1884. Knowing that forgiveness is always there as well the love of Jesus.
1885. When I am counseled on how to deal better with certain sins and sin as a whole.
1886. The relief after absolution. The hope that I can change my ways.
1887. When the priest knows you and understands how you live your life.
1888. I had a particularly long confession and a lot came to the surface I didn't remember. I was afraid I was taking too long I started to apologize and the priest said, "I could just run outside and do cartwheels!" I never knew exactly what he meant but I think it was one of two things: happy I was finally done or happy for me that all of that was off my chest. Either way I was pleased!
1889. A feeling of relief.
1890. The miracle of spiritual healing that takes place when the priest says your sins are forgiven.
1891. Once I brought the sin of anger to Confession and I was told as my penance to pray for them. Having the penance as an action to help fight against that sin helped me a lot.
1892. Occasionally it sounds like the priest knows my heart and speaks into it. Those times are the best.
1893. When a priest helps me get to the root cause; learning the spiritual conditions that different circumstances, actions, and sins impose on me.
1894. The times I've felt heard and left with hope in my heart.
1895. When the priest questions and drags the remaining sins to the surface. It's the best clean ever!
1896. When I am able to relax and confess my sins.
1897. I returned to confession after many, many years. I wrote my sins on a piece of paper after a long examination of conscience. I was extremely nervous and unsure of the response of the priest. I told him about my list. He told me softly and gently to begin. There were no harsh comments or sounds of exasperation. He was patient and listened. I cried. He spoke comforting words. I was grateful and so sorry I had waited so long. He absolved me and I experienced that beautiful peace.
1898. The feeling of hope and a fresh start.
1899. When advice was given to fix an issue causing sin.
1900. Honest insight from the priest.
1901. One priest called me by name, even though we had only been introduced once several years before. It was a "homecoming" experience. He also reminded me that once we confess, God throws all those sins in a bottomless lake and posts a sign that says, "No Fishing." For someone who finds it hard to forgive herself, that was profound. For

absolution, he stood and laid his hands on my head as he said the words. I cried in happiness.

1902. I prefer a larger service. After readings, music and prayers, the attendees line up in the front of church to await confession with an individual priest.
1903. When I feel like I'm encountering God's love, mercy and advice.
1904. When I prayed for a good confession and was able to be totally open and truthful about all my trespasses. It was so freeing.
1905. The relief of knowing that I have confessed to my sins and that I asked for forgiveness trying not to return for the same reason
1906. Face-to-face with the priest who gave a penance other than standard Catholic prayers.
1907. When a priest takes time to talk it over. Why am I angry? Why do I keep doing the same thing over and over? I like spending a few extra minutes exploring these things. It's helpful.
1908. When a random parish priest was kind and understanding that I had to bring my three year old in with me, and let me set my son up in the side bathroom connected to the confession room, with an Elmo video playing so I could still have a private confession.
1909. Confession with my spiritual director where I receive honest, loving, and prayerful advice faithful to Church teaching.
1910. Feeling free again.
1911. Feeling a sense of relief that I confessed my sins.
1912. At a silent retreat where you have a little more time.
1913. Confessors who give a brief word of advice, or spiritual thought, and simply absolution.
1914. Face-to-face with a gentle voice and kind heart.
1915. At one point I hadn't been to confession in over seven years. The more I thought about it, the more I was scared to go since I was embarrassed how long ago it was. I finally worked up the nerve to go. When I confessed that it had been 7 years since my last confession, the priest said two simple words that lifted this huge weight of fear and I was flooded with love. He said, "Welcome back." My fears of getting a lecture on waiting so long we're lifted, as the lecture was nonexistent. And I flooded the priest with all of my sins I could think of, and he explained to me that it is difficult to live a life without sin and these things are part of being a human and God is always available for forgiveness.
1916. Priests who give me practical every day habits that I can practice to overcome sin and temptation.
1917. When I'm reminded of the love of Jesus and that I love Jesus even when I'm ashamed.
1918. When the priest has been gentle, not that he doesn't tell me what is wrong, but does not condemn me for my sins.
1919. When I had the same confessor for ten years.
1920. Several years ago at a special Divine mercy Sunday service, I went to confession after many years. I felt lifted, a sense of relief, and hanged. I now go to confession at least 4 or 5 times a year.
1921. Having a priest really engaged, and share thoughts of his wisdom.
1922. One time, the priest referred to me as "the daughter of the King." In that moment I not only felt forgiven but loved and willing to do anything to live up to the epithet.

Another time the priest gave me a surprisingly edifying penance: I was to sit with Jesus for three minutes and do nothing but love Him. Those three minutes turned into a morning habit before the Tabernacle, as I tried to figure out what "loving Jesus" looked and felt like.

1923. It seems I confess better with a little time before the Blessed Sacrament to do my examen, asking the Holy Spirit to show me the sins I've hidden or forgotten.
1924. Communal Penance Services.
1925. When the priest not only provided the sacrament but took the time to sit with and help me.
1926. When I was asked if I thought I was God? I was stunned which then made me reflect with the confessor. I am not God and I can only take care of myself. I truly learned from that.
1927. It's always deeply moving when the priest seems happy that I have come to confession, not because they know me personally but just generally excited to be doing this. It's great when the confessor does not seem rushed. I also really appreciate when the confessor takes me very seriously even though sometimes the things I say sound ridiculous. The best moments have been when a confessor has helped me understand a situation differently and with more hope -- helping me see how even my failings can be part of God's plan for my salvation. I also tend to be pretty harsh on myself and there have been times when the priest was so gentle and affirmed my good intentions that I really felt that Jesus was speaking to me personally.
1928. When the priest seems really interested in what I am saying and is really involved in the Sacrament. I have found that even when confessing embarrassing sins, that the Priest almost always is gentle and encouraging.
1929. When I went to Confession for the first time in 5 years – I had met a Catholic guy who wouldn't date non-Catholics – the priest and I were both in tears. Absolution felt so good. My husband and I have now been married for 31 years!
1930. When the priest told me he was happy when I came to confession.
1931. If the priest is peaceful, then I'm able to be peaceful and make myself available to the gifts of this sacrament. If the priest makes me feel like he's on a time clock, then I have a much less personal experience.
1932. Being freed of my sins!
1933. The best was with a Catholic chaplain in Baghdad. He had been hearing confessions from soldiers for a while and apparently developed a comprehensive set of questions to which the penitent only had to answer "yes" or "no". He missed nothing.
1934. When the priest helped me understand why I kept sinning in the way I was, and overall helped me notice how I was harming my community and made it easier for me to avoid (or at least have a great chance to avoid) my habitual sins.
1935. One penance I received was simply to spend some time kneeling in front of and gaze at the Crucifix in the church. This had a very profound impact on me.
1936. I went nine years without going to Reconciliation, and, wow, that first time back was really dumping a load of crud off my soul. The priest was good.
1937. When a group of priest hearing confessions together.
1938. Making a big, long thought out confession and receiving a very merciful and caring response. Emulating how simple and complete God's mercy is if we only ask

1939. I have had many positive experiences. I will always remember the kindness of a priest that I saw for many years who challenged me to do better and asked hard questions, but always reassured me of God's unconditional love for me and his prayerful support of me during difficult times on my journey. I also got tremendously good counsel from the priest who heard my confession during my first experience of mortal sin.
1940. I prefer to confess face-to-face, which I feel is more personal.
1941. Priests who made me feel comfortable in talking to them and listened to me carefully before they began to speak. I already know I am a sinner and I could sense the love and understanding in their heart while they spoke to me.
1942. Having the priest say that he understands my struggle.
1943. For me, the best experiences are when the priest engages me in conversation about my sins, trials etc. I feel a more personal relationship with the Lord in those moments. Jesus says it is He to whom we are speaking, so I believe that Jesus is guiding me, correcting me, affirming me.
1944. When I receive good penances that make me believe the priest is trying to help me fight sin and take a step toward holiness.
1945. I went to a priest who was so compassionate that he helped through my confession and also gave me direction.
1946. When the priest helps me understand and feel the love of God.
1947. There was an old priest in New York City with a heavy Italian accent who shook his head gravely and said, "Dio mio" when I confessed, following it up with assurances of God's love and mercy. I was grateful for the reminder that our sins wound God. Another priest took between 15 and 20 minutes for each penitent, even though the lines were long. People stayed and waited. He asked a lot of questions and suggested specific devotions and practices to grow in holiness. The lines were long because we were all willing to wait for that degree of engagement with the sacrament.
1948. When I have been met with tender mercy and hope in God's forgiveness and love for me.
1949. Being made to feel normal.
1950. When the priest was really listening and gave good, concrete advice and a penance that was tied to my sins. But any confession where I receive absolution is a good one!
1951. Communal penance services.
1952. My best experiences weren't so much singular confessional experiences, but were times in my life when I was most able to find opportunities for confession, due either to zealous pastors who made ample opportunities for the sacrament, or due to living in places where the sacrament was readily available.
1953. Reconciliation as a conversation, dialogue between both
1954. The best are always when the priest does his part without innovations or cutting corners.
1955. Knowing I am being absolved of my sins.
1956. When the priest has sincerely listened and helped me to be a better person and to know that I am not alone in how I feel.
1957. When the priest made the sign of the cross and draped the stole over my head.
1958. When I experienced true forgiveness without judgment.

*Merciful Like the Father*

1959. The best experiences would be when I've been troubled and felt compassion and was given advice to assist me with difficult times.
1960. After a gap of about ten years between confessions, I visited a Church with no intention of going to confession that day. But the priest was hearing and so I went. The confessor was absolutely the best I could have ever encountered. He was so excited to have me back in the confessional and told me that God was rejoicing that I had returned. It was the best experience in my faith life that I've had and a turning point for me in my faith.
1961. When the priest acknowledges my anger. I need to know that I am not crazy and do not feel like I have to apologize for my feelings.
1962. When the priest really tries to focus on my problems.
1963. A priest kept giving me one Hail Mary for my penance every time I went to him for confession. One day I said, "Father, that is not enough." He looked at me with such tenderness and said, "I can't give you enough." That was an awesome realization.
1964. The peace of mind that comes from confessing to the Lord my sins.
1965. Going during a huge conference for Catholic youth. I like to go when I'm probably never going to see the confessor again!
1966. Having a priest who listens but doesn't judge, who realizes that some people like me get really nervous and tongue tied.
1967. The feeling of forgiveness
1968. During retreat programs when I have a rapport with the priest.
1969. A kind, loving, positive priest
1970. On retreats, after tragedies that really caused heartache and sorrowful, and after taking a long break from receiving the powerful sacrament and receiving it again.
1971. Just the feeling of relief and forgiveness. There's nothing quite like it.
1972. Just getting the weight off my shoulders.
1973. The fact that after making a confession, I have felt that I might not be worthy of absolution, but my priest assured me that God loves all of us and we are forgiven.
1974. When a priest told me that there are alternative ways of looking at certain situations. I may not see things from the correct perspective. That was very enlightening.
1975. When a priest took my name and followed through with me, giving me resources and making sure I made an action plan.
1976. My best experiences have been when the priest has given helpful advice or a particularly helpful penance.
1977. Getting a feeling of pure understanding and acceptance.
1978. When the priest has used kind words and been understanding.
1979. When I've received spiritual advice.
1980. Peace and forgiveness.
1981. When the priest reminds me how forgiving God is and what joy this should bring us! I feel renewed after a kind and hopeful confession.
1982. During my first year as a Catholic, the priests I confessed to were so kind and understanding. They helped me if I forgot what to say or forgot the order of what to say. They also encouraged me to keep coming.
1983. When the priest asks me questions about the sins I bring up, and gives advice on how to stop them.
1984. A considerate priest.

1985. The communal experiences of reconciliation.
1986. When a priest gave me a reminder to forgive myself for my sins.
1987. When I felt the confessor understood me and when his response was very human.
1988. When I have left the confessional or church knowing that I have been forgiven and a burden has been lifted from my shoulders.
1989. When I attend penance services
1990. I like the bit of advice that is given along with the penance.
1991. When I have had compassionate and understanding priests.
1992. Having the privilege to obtain mercy of God through the sacrament.
1993. When I've walked away forgiven of something that had been haunting my conscience. Also when I've been encouraged to pursue sanctity by getting real advice even for my smallest faults.
1994. The times I was listened to and not criticized.
1995. When the confessor demonstrated patience and was willing to engage in dialogue.
1996. When a priest gives me practical advice to incorporate into my daily life.
1997. The best experience was when Father not only gave me absolution but some quick practical tips that I could put into practice.
1998. The kindness and gentleness in the priest's voice
1999. Having it over.
2000. The practical suggestions I was given.
2001. A priest who listens and has kind words that God forgives us and loves us
2002. A confessor who listens.
2003. When they are private.
2004. When I've received solid spiritual direction in the form of reading materials (from the saints, etc.), a penance in the form of a one-day retreat to a shrine, and just loving kindness. Feeling like I was really forgiven and not judged and condemned.
2005. Coming back after a long time away from reconciliation.
2006. I feel refreshed after I have gone to confession. It feels like a new beginning.
2007. Receiving Confession by a priest who made it seem like I was sitting at the kitchen table taking with Jesus. I also appreciate when the priest understands how I feel and why I may have acted in an unchristian way. I always feel welcomed and comfortable with him.
2008. When I was really stressed, the Priest sensed it and said he could be available to talk another time. You could tell he was concerned.
2009. One priest always made it a healing, caring experience filled with empathy and devoid of fear.
2010. Hearing Jesus through the priest tell me to get my act together when I was living a very sinful life.
2011. I once went once during a women's retreat. It was very calming.
2012. Those that have been willing to help me confess my sins.
2013. Listening to a missionary give his talks and then going to confession in front of him. He made me feel everything will be ok.
2014. A lightness of being at one with the Lord.
2015. When I have returned to the sacrament after a time away, and when priests offer compassion and wisdom.

*Merciful Like the Father*

2016. When the priest listened well, counseled me and gave me a penance to help me to stay away from future sins.
2017. My best experiences have probably been at retreats when there is a little more time.
2018. In high school when I did stuff I was not proud of and was forgiven.
2019. When the priest gives me guidance and real penance for my sins, something that relates to my confession such as writing letters of apology to explain why I was angry with my children and mail them to each child.
2020. When priest gave me confidence that I can do better.
2021. The feeling of freedom.
2022. Each time I hear the words, "Absolvo te", or "I absolve you".
2023. When on a spiritual retreat.
2024. Not feeling embarrassed or ashamed of the sins before the priest, because he is really empathetic and provides spiritual guidance.
2025. When I went to the deep dark past and confessed something that I had hidden even from myself, the priest showed me great charity, kindness and he seemed genuinely happy that I would be absolved of this and my other sins.
2026. When I'm met with attentive listening, a focus on healing, and a positive attitude.
2027. In the confessional with a priest I did not know.
2028. When you leave the confessional and you feel good about yourself and hopeful.
2029. The feeling of calm after going to confession.
2030. When the priest actually listens and looks into your eyes and you feel Jesus is present.
2031. When the priest told me I would probably be eligible for an annulment.
2032. A most holy confessor acknowledged the human struggle to become better and more holy and reminded me that we are all in this together.
2033. When I had the chance to go face-to-face
2034. I always feel so blessed when I leave the confessional.
2035. Going face-to-face after being away from the Sacrament for many years was very rewarding.
2036. The renewal.
2037. When the priest listens, asks questions and offers help. A priest offered financial help for my husband and me to have counseling when we weren't even members of that parish! It led to incredible healing for us.
2038. When a priest who knew me told me to continue leading a good life.
2039. The overall feeling of forgiveness and the powerful reminder of God's grace.
2040. Receiving attention and time. Way too often, even in confession, the priest knows there is a line waiting and other duties await.
2041. Feeling heard and forgiven.
2042. Really feeling understood.
2043. Letting go of past mistakes.
2044. A feeling of peace, forgiveness and love.
2045. Advice, clarity on what constitutes a sin.
2046. Brutal honesty from the priest to "get up, and do it. No one else will make this change but you."
2047. When I went face-to-face with a trusted and known priest. Knowing what is said there is left there.

2048. My best experiences have been when priests asked me questions about why I think I have sinned in the ways that I have, and then they talked through my sins with me.
2049. My first confession in forty years was last October before I faced a serious medical issue and testing. The priest spent over an hour with me and helped me make the examination of conscience. It was so great.
2050. Group reconciliation services with prayer and music.
2051. The best experiences are when the priest asks clarifying questions and talks about virtues that counter the sins I'm confessing.
2052. It's always been the kindness and guidance of my caring priest.
2053. When I've been able to see my children receive the sacrament as well.
2054. Coming away with a sense of forgiveness and starting new.
2055. When the priest talks with me and asks me questions, helping me think through cause and effect of sin.
2056. An overwhelming feeling of relief.
2057. When priests talk to me as an individual, rather than just saying their part of the Sacrament.
2058. Talking to the priest after I confess my sins. The last few times I went, I had awesome experiences which made me feel like I have nothing to fear the next time I go.
2059. When I first went back to confession after being away from it for a while, I felt the weight of the world was removed. Father was welcoming and encouraging.
2060. When it was private and the priest spent quality time with me.
2061. When a priest affirmed me and clarified something I'm struggling with. He didn't say it was ok, but helped me identify what was wrong and why.
2062. When I've been able to go face-to-face. I don't like the little dark booth.
2063. When father was able to sit face-to-face and genuinely seemed to care. I don't feel all priests give this attention, but it is so important.
2064. The fact that my confessors have never been judgmental, just caring and forgiving.
2065. Receiving only a few prayers as penance and having to fix what I did. For me this caused me to reflect on what and why I did it, more than a longer time praying.
2066. Face-to-face confession was amazing.
2067. When a priest told me if I forgot some sins, it is okay.
2068. As a young child, I was scared. My experience as an adult has been very positive. Going face-to-face treats the sacrament as a meeting between Jesus, the priest, and me. It makes the sacrament very personal.
2069. When the priest was welcoming to me when I went to Confession after a very long time away. He helped me find how to live my faith better, in the sense that I cannot solve everything myself.
2070. When the priest knows me a little bit and I can open up easier about my sins.
2071. The priest actually counseled me on how to make changes.
2072. The feeling of true forgiveness.
2073. Feeling at peace when I'm done.
2074. When the priest said I was a better person than he was.
2075. When I met true understanding.
2076. A priest who reminded me of the Father's love .
2077. Face-to-face speaking to my priest.
2078. A great personal conversation.

*Merciful Like the Father*

2079. When the priest began by saying, "Be at peace." It really helped me to feel less anxious. Also when a priest understood my anger and anxiety over current events. He validated that it was okay to be upset.
2080. When a priest told me my son was going to be a priest.
2081. When there is such a sense of mutualism and community that I really feel like I am talking to God.
2082. When I feel relieved and refreshed and positive.
2083. When a priest tells the truth and cuts through the garbage.
2084. When a priest related a personal story of his struggle with change when I was I was having the same struggle and gave me a scripture to reflect upon.
2085. Getting great advice from the priest.
2086. When the priest is friendly, welcoming and helpful.
2087. The sense of God's grace.
2088. When the priest took time to listen and helped me truly to feel God's love and mercy.
2089. When the priest provided direction and remedies for my sins.
2090. I appreciate anonymity from a priest I know. Spiritual counseling is appreciated.
2091. Where I learned more about myself.
2092. The day I made my first confession at age 7.
2093. When I was old enough finally to understand that Christ still loves me and wants me to always seek Him and have a truly honest and open relationship with Him no matter what sins I committed in the past and even when I continually fall I can always try again through the Sacrament.
2094. When the priest takes my sins seriously and doesn't try to diminish them.
2095. When I felt listened to, understood, and given solid thoughts to pray about to help me move forward.
2096. When I got short but helpful guidance.
2097. The lifting of the weight of sin off. Getting guidance from my priest, who knows me and my situation.
2098. When a priest has taken the time not only to listen and give good advice, but when I have truly felt Christ speaking through him. When this happens, my appreciation for the sacrament and my relationship with Christ is renewed.
2099. When I see myself as a new being in Christ, unencumbered to approach God.
2100. The best experiences were the ones that were part of a penance service or parish mission.
2101. My best experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation are when the priest listens and sometimes asks for clarification. The atmosphere of love and acceptance in the reconciliation room is comforting.
2102. Unburdening my conscience and remembering God's love are the best things. If a good bit of easily-retainable advice is offered, that makes it extra useful.
2103. There were two situations in life that I needed to confess multiple times over a 20-year period. The spirit led me to various priests to confess these two sins and they each had words of wisdom to share that I needed to hear at those times, like guideposts leading me to deeper healing.
2104. When the priest takes a little time to counsel and encourage versus reprimand and lecture.

2105. At one point I hadn't been in 15 years. I was a mess and the priest was nonjudgmental and helpful.
2106. When I go to a very good and holy priest who gives great spiritual advice on how to go be a good person and to focus on Jesus and the saints.
2107. When a priest understood what I was going through and gave appropriate advice. He made me understand that I was being too hard on myself and that God is more merciful than I was giving him credit for.
2108. When I've been very worried about what a priest would say when I confessed something I thought was terrible, but he didn't remark on it.
2109. When priests personified the mercy of God and I didn't feel judged but rather welcomed back with open arms.
2110. When I was encouraged not to put myself in situations that led to sins I confessed.
2111. When I came back to the Church and Father took time with me.
2112. When I am given reassurances that God has forgiven me in spite of my wretchedness.
2113. Sitting with a priest and making a life confession when I was doing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.
2114. When a priest helped me really encounter Jesus and encouraged me to keep up the good fight.
2115. When the priest helped me realize that my fear of Satan's stronghold on me was unnecessary and gently encouraged me to have faith in God's plan for my life.
2116. When confession has been short, to the point.
2117. Peace in my heart and knowing I'm forgiving.
2118. My priest always gives good advice. You can tell he really cares and is interested in what you are saying.
2119. I have been blessed with great consolations from confessors, most particularly in reminding me of God's love and mercy even when I am most confused and fearful.
2120. A priest who is reassuring and knows what he is doing.
2121. When I've had an understanding priest.
2122. I feel more free after confession.
2123. When Father has given me actionable ways to stay out of sin.
2124. The best are when the priest challenges me and gives me hope.
2125. When the priest goes beyond the sin to help me figure out what is at work and how to move away from it. My regular confessor introduced me to the particular examen. Life changing!
2126. Mercy! Understanding! Absolution! The reminder that I need not continue to feel guilty and anxious about my sins after they have been absolved.
2127. When priests offers appropriate counsel when prompted.
2128. The message Our Lord gives me through Father really helps me in that moment but also in times of tribulations or hard times.
2129. The best and most meaningful experience was the first time I went to confession after being away from the church for over 25 years. So much weight was lifted! It felt good to know I'd been forgiven.
2130. When the priest actually tailors his message to my problem areas. The uniform, memorized speech is less than inspiring.
2131. When the priest explained that what I was confessing was nothing out of the ordinary.
2132. Feeling that the penance was "spot on."

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2133. Priests who are giving of their time, readily saying yes whenever asked to hear confession outside of the usual time.
2134. When the priest was compassionate when I was terrified embarrassed, and worried, and then crying with joy when I came out of the confessional! I truly experienced the touch of God.
2135. The best confessions are after the best examinations.
2136. I was blessed to have a comfort level with my chosen confessor, who guided me beforehand in the examination of conscience.
2137. Making a general confession prior to the Holy Triduum. Having the weight of past sins taken of my soul and heart.
2138. When I've experienced the Lord's mercy and trust that he loves me and forgives me.
2139. After being away from the church for more than 20 years, I went to confession, Father gave me absolution and at the end said " Welcome home." It was very moving.
2140. The feeling of lightness and joy that come the sacrament
2141. When the priest has provided some direction and offered prayer and asked for prayers.
2142. When priests have offered sound, practical advice for avoiding sin or growing in virtue. When I was treated mercifully, despite the seriousness of my sins.
2143. When I was given strength to get up and reach for holiness.
2144. When a priest doesn't try to justify my sins, and just absolves me
2145. When the priest takes time in commenting or instructing. When he takes the time to listen.
2146. The best confession was a life confession that I made when I was 33. I had never heard of confession before then, although I had twelve years of Catholic education and received all my sacraments. It was life changing. I didn't feel rushed. The priest was truly present and recognized the importance of the sacrament and gave me direct concrete guidance in my penance.
2147. When a wonderful priest took time with me and helped me understand that I was truly forgiven for the sin I discussed with him.
2148. When I have received counsel.
2149. My best experiences happen when I really examine my sins and write them down.
2150. When the priest was calm and patient to give me time because confession for me is always embarrassing and makes me nervous.
2151. Walking home after confession without fear of traffic.
2152. My first confession at age 42 with a wonderful priest who took all the time necessary.
2153. All my confessions have been good.
2154. Release from a sin that held me captive for years
2155. When I have felt genuine compassion and feelings of concern, care, and hope.
2156. The kindness of the priest when I returned to confession after 34 years. He gave me helpful suggestions.
2157. A few years ago on Mercy Sunday, a priest challenged me to make a change that has made a difference in my life.
2158. During my younger years when I was struggling with more serious sins, the confessor encouraged me and reminded me of God's love and mercy.
2159. When a priest actually listened to what I was saying and "diagnosed" me with something I wasn't aware of.

2160. When I have gone to a confessor of my choosing and not to whoever is hearing confessions at this time.
2161. With priest who is firm but understanding. I need someone to keep me accountable.
2162. When the priest gave me practical advice on avoiding sin.
2163. Most of the time I feel rushed like a drive through burger joint, but when you are listened to and asked questions, I have had my best experiences.
2164. The relief that comes from being back right with God.
2165. A general confession, where I confessed every sin I could remember.
2166. Experiences like when a priest gets to the core of the matter and addresses the root cause for a sin and not just a symptom, when I've been pulled back into the love of the Father, when I have been given practical steps like waking up at the same time everyday no matter or what, or one confession after recurring sin of masturbation and pornography that a priest gave me a six-point battle plan.
2167. I am grateful for all the basic confessions, when I confess my sins and the priest gives me absolution and penance.
2168. The best sacrament I have experienced was my second time, because I knew what to say and I was comfortable telling the priest my sins.
2169. Having a parish priest truly listen and understand something I was going through. Walking and talking with me instead of a more "formal" confession. That experience has stayed with me for over 20 years. I have never forgotten his kindness.
2170. All of my experiences have been good, as I feel the weight of my sins being lifted.
2171. When I have met kind, caring priests.
2172. Being told that God's love is greater than any sin.
2173. When after more than 10 years I went to confession and the priest said welcome back and was glad I returned. I was expecting a negative reaction.
2174. Kind and understanding priest who put me at peace.
2175. I became good friends with a priest years ago and going to confession was fun because it would start with confession and then end with a good conversation and laughs.
2176. When I was reminded how to do an examination of conscience to ensure I remembered all my serious sins. Also when the priest asks questions and clarifications.
2177. Absolution is always the best! The best confessions normally happen for me when confession is offered many times throughout the week.
2178. When I feel forgiven and loved by God.
2179. I'm happiest when it feels like a spiritual direction conversation.
2180. The more humble I am in confession, the more grace I seem to get from it. Doing a "whole life" confession – even things I already confessed and had been forgiven for – was very healing because as you grow in your faith, you may see the sin differently and it helps to bring it to God again based on your new knowledge or insight, especially if the sin is still bothering you.
2181. When I was able to tell the confessor my problem and he listened compassionately and was comforting.
2182. When I am so down and thinking that I have failed, being uplifted, knowing that even in sin God loves me and has a wonderful purpose in spite of my sins.
2183. When a priest provided advice for fighting vice.

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2184. I went to another parish for convenience on a Saturday morning and liked how there was a big opened window with a curtain and I had an option to kneel or sit. I sat because it helped me to relax and was welcoming, like I was talking with a friend, Jesus.
2185. My best experiences have been when the priest has given me specific suggestions on things I can do to help my faith life. Even when they're simple. For example, a priest suggested saying the words "Hail Mary" (not even the whole prayer) when I find myself conflicted in what to do or getting impatient or angry.
2186. When the priest makes good eye contact with me, when he acknowledges that he has heard what I shared and comments on it in an understanding, empathic way.
2187. When the priest unpacks a bit of what I've shared and offers perspective and guidance or practical advice.
2188. When the priest really took his time to talk with me and calm me down when I got upset.
2189. Going to a priest I know
2190. When empathy and love come through.
2191. When I get release from a sin that has been troubling me.
2192. Getting it over with!
2193. When a priest is very understanding and forgiving and patient with me when I'm nervous.
2194. I recently explained to a priest that I was experiencing guilt in spite of the fact that I had already confessed my sins. When he explained that I was not allowing myself to truly experience God's grace the way he intended it, the feeling of guilt began to lift. This really helped me.
2195. Getting advice from the priest.
2196. My best experiences in the confessional have been with a priest who listens, who is not condemning of my actions, who is happy to have me and does not give the same penance each time.
2197. A fantastic feeling like a weight has been lifted from me.
2198. Feeling completely loved and forgiven. Renewed. The priest didn't talk at me but listened and reflected Christ's love and peace.
2199. Face-to-face conversations with the priest that allow me to open up and just pour my heart out, and know that Jesus truly speaks to me.
2200. When I have received forgiveness with no judgment.
2201. When I know that the priest hears me, comments on what I say and doesn't just go right to absolution. This allows me to feel that I had a personal interaction with Jesus.
2202. When I felt the priest really listened.
2203. When a priest has told me he understands the struggles I have and sometimes even said what I did (like yelling at my kids) wasn't really a sin.
2204. Communal services. I get more out of the experience with readings.
2205. When the priest made a positive comment.
2206. When I have a confessor who interacts with me during my Confession.
2207. When the priest gives you advice on how to move forward.
2208. The best experiences have been when I feel as though I have thoroughly prepared through an in depth examination of conscience.

2209. When God has given me the strength to admit my sins to a priest and I've received the mercy extended to me through absolution
2210. Every one is great. Outside of the Eucharist, it's perhaps our most intimate encounter with Jesus and it's always rewarding walking out of there.
2211. Once I truly felt not only absolution but a great deal of compassion and guidance.
2212. When a priest takes the time to talk to me about why and how my sin damages my relationship with the Lord.
2213. I have experienced the letting go of my unworthiness and felt how I am truly God's beloved daughter. That has really let me become free to love myself and give that love to others.
2214. Confessing something that the priest immediately understood.
2215. Gentleness and support in continuing the effort to be the person God wishes to have in his community.
2216. When I am at ease.
2217. When what you say is understood.
2218. A priest who helped me to find the real sin behind another, and helped me to get better.
2219. When I've felt compassion and forgiveness and our Lord's welcoming love even though I have hurt our relationship through my sins.
2220. About a year after my dad died, a priest once suggested I imagine myself sitting on God's lap and being loved as part of my prayer. This was a profound experience for me.
2221. When I have come out of the confessional feeling I have just had a level headed confession conversation with God and the priest about my transgressions and have a better plan to improve myself no matter the penance.
2222. When I do not feel rushed and am able to more than just confess my mortal sins, e.g., where I can address some of the events and behaviors that lead me to sin.
2223. When priests have taken the time to offer some direction how to grow in my spiritual life, and avoid committing the sins I had confessed.
2224. When I was sincerely contrite and "felt" God's forgiving love.
2225. When the priest told me that was a really good confession and then asked me if I had ever thought of spiritual direction. He became my first spiritual director. He was an answer to a special prayer.
2226. The best experiences are when I know that I was prayerful. That I was truly sorry and focused on encountering Jesus's mercy.
2227. Going to the same priest regularly face-to-face.
2228. When my confessor is more spiritually mature than I am and can direct my "penance" in a way that promotes my spiritual growth.
2229. When I told the priest of my lack of trust in God, that He was going to give me things in life that I could not handle, the priest took my hands and told me that everyone suffers this at times in his life and asked if I knew of Jesus' great love for me and that I am never alone. I felt the love and mercy of Christ more than ever before at confession.
2230. When the priest has made helpful suggestions.
2231. Knowing that you can confess your sins in private and speak to God, asking for forgiveness and just truly believing.

*Merciful Like the Father*

2232. Having a priest remind me that Jesus was present and absolving me of my sins, loving me, showing me mercy. The joy of being honest with the priest and being filled with God's love in absolution. Hearing God's message to me, when the priest speaks with me.
2233. The relief that comes from confession.
2234. My best experience has been when I have felt compassion and understanding from the priest in regards to my shortcomings, and have received guidance on moral issues.
2235. When it is not before Mass but at a penance service.
2236. When my confessor takes the time to respond in a connected way to me and gives a kind word to the weary soul. This shows the infinite love of our Father.
2237. When I have encountered forgiveness and understanding.
2238. The feeling of relief.
2239. When the priest takes the time to discuss my sins with me and gives me a unique penance.
2240. When the priest asked questions about different things that I said.
2241. Conversations with the priest, which challenge me to be a better person.
2242. Sincerity, caring and concern from the priest, and good advice.
2243. I was asked what I was going to do to reconcile with the person I was jealous of. I liked being asked that, because it represented doing something concrete to show I was sorry. I think I ended up committing to pray for her for a week. I also like to be asked questions, and be more interactive. I do realize, though, that there isn't always time for that.
2244. When the priest helps me to make sure I confessed all my sins and goes over the ten commandments with me.
2245. All experiences have been good for me.
2246. When I am in need of encouragement and the priest gives it.
2247. The best experience is when I have found forgiveness for serious sins that I have committed.
2248. One particular priest would ask what was your state in life, general age, how would you like to grow closer to Our Lord, what do you struggle with. I had the impression that the priest really had an interest in my spiritual state.
2249. When the priest talks to me as a human being who has sometimes fallen but who truly desires to be in right relationship with our Lord.
2250. Of course the feeling of forgiveness!
2251. The opportunity to connect to God more.
2252. Experiencing God's mercy and truly trusting that my sins have been forgiven; when the priest assured me of God's mercy and also said he would remember me while praying his next Mass; receiving more challenging penances as opposed to one Hail Mary or something along those lines.
2253. When the priest gave me good advice, and encouragement to keep up and grow.
2254. When I have been away for the sacrament for a while, to be welcomed by the mercy of the Lord!
2255. My best experiences have been when I hear the priest offer heartfelt remedies for how to overcome my sins. One of my confessors always has a great sense of the peace of Christ and trust and abandonment in God and shares this with me to help me overcome anxieties and fears.

2256. The best experiences have been those in which I did not feel rushed. My confessor actively listened and asked questions, and challenged me.
2257. Going face-to-face, letting the confessor get to know me.
2258. Sometimes, a priest will give me a passage of scripture to read. In the most recent instance of this, I felt like Jesus himself spoke to me through that whole experience of confession. It was very powerful.
2259. When there's an open dialogue.
2260. When I felt the priest was listening carefully to my words and expressed the sentiment that we need to grow bit by bit to get where we need to be.
2261. When I was flustered, the priest was calm and patient.
2262. When the priest has given honest admonishment coupled with encouragement.
2263. I have had many! I receive the sacrament monthly.
2264. Forgiveness.
2265. When a priest reminds me that I don't have to keep confessing the same sin after it had been forgiven.
2266. Confessing to a priest who is open, warm and understanding.
2267. I had one experience years ago which was very spiritual. At the very end before I got up to leave, the priest placed his palm on my forehead and said very calmly "God loves you." I felt the warm energy from his palm and the calmness in his voice and it moved me to tears, because I felt that the Holy Spirit had come upon me in that moment and given me a deep understanding of the gift of God's love. I will never forget the peace in my heart.
2268. When the priest has been kind, compassionate and understanding. There have been times when it was also obvious that the priest has a strong prayer life because his union with Jesus was evident in the words he spoke, words that were efficacious and healing for my heart.
2269. Experiencing the love and mercy of God.
2270. Being absolved by a very kind and understanding priest.
2271. Having understanding and compassionate priests who offer good counsel and guidance.
2272. Feeling whole and forgiven after leaving the confessional.
2273. When the priest is compassionate, relatable, and gives feedback that is pastoral.
2274. Confession during my grade school years, because the pastor at my school was really nice and I thought he was truly there to hear me.
2275. My best experiences are clearly being forgiven of my sins.
2276. When I've met kind priests.
2277. Going when I was in school and in communal penance services.
2278. My first confession, because I really felt like a new person after it.
2279. When I have had the opportunity to have an authentic conversation with the priest.
2280. My college priest, who was a theologian and an academic, was my best confessor because of his wisdom, openness, and compassion. Likewise, an old monsignor listened patiently and with obvious love and life experience.
2281. When I have not had to look at the priest but had the chance to go in a confessional.
2282. When the priest listened patiently and offered guidance and reassurance. The spirit of God could be sensed in the spirit with which the priest spoke and revered God and the sacrament.

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2283. When I've had priests who have been listeners, giving some advice about my sins, imparting a sense of God's mercy, and assigned penances related to the sin with absolution.
2284. One priest literally spent ten minutes talking with me about a particular sin I was struggling with, asking for more context in order to offer guidance on how to approach that area of my life and avoid temptation.
2285. When I have a chance to have a conversation with the priest.
2286. The first time I went after the death of my spouse.
2287. Feeling that sense of soul-cleansing.
2288. The warm welcoming by the priest
2289. The laying upon of hands and forgiveness.
2290. When a priest really takes the time to listen, ask questions, and give penances related to your sins to help you get better, versus just saying a few Hail Mary's. He's had me jot a few things I'm thankful for in a gratitude journal for a few days. Another time he asked that I spend some time with our Mother Mary in prayer each day reflecting on her experiences and how she could help me as a mother. He always confirmed first that I could reasonably do them, and they were so helpful and really brought me closer to Jesus. My first confession after 20 years was also an amazing experience, as the first thing the priest said to me was "Welcome back!" I was so nervous, but it was such a comfort as that is exactly what I think Jesus would have said to me.
2291. A welcoming smile from the priest. A parish reconciliation service really makes a difference in my personal preparation.
2292. The best experience was it being available to me and my fellow parishioners by our dedicated priests during the pandemic and it was given outside in the beauty of God's creation.
2293. The ones where I held nothing back and ended up crying.
2294. When I make a sincere confession.
2295. When I've been able to have a face-to-face discussion and receive the reassurance that God forgives.
2296. The feeling of release and peace after absolution. Receiving understanding of the human condition through a priest who reminds me of how much we are loved by God.
2297. A private confession behind a screen with the exact words of absolution given and no creative deviations from the Rite by the priest.
2298. I have received thoughtful advice from priests about how to resolve conflicts with other people.
2299. I had a priest who used to give a specific Scripture to meditate on. It wasn't a standard one; he gave different passages for each person and he'd put it on a sticky note for you to take with you.
2300. When I felt it was personal, between me and my confessor, with a special focus areas that troubled me most.
2301. Being welcomed back after being away from the sacraments for a few years after college.
2302. I have been very blessed to have very positive reconciliation experiences. I can tell that priests are deeply committed to offering this sacrament and that it makes them happy to do so!

2303. When I have been down and out, the priest's reassurance that I can start again has helped me walk away feeling a little bit lighter.
2304. When the priest tells me they have had a similar issue, I find myself not to be too hard on myself.
2305. The expression of understanding of the priest. My husband passed 6 months ago, I have a lot of regrets. The priest was so understanding.
2306. When the priest gives some spiritual direction on controlling our personal vices. Many times this direction has been something I needed to grow spiritually in my faith.
2307. When I not only get to confess, but to have a listening ear.
2308. When the priest has given advice to put into daily practice, such as wearing a piece of religious jewelry to have a physical reminder of Christ's presence
2309. Feeling forgiven.
2310. Sharing about a concern and hearing the reassurances of the priest.
2311. A priest asked me to pray for someone else, another asked me to pray for my husband, etc. A sincere priest makes a difference in the person confessing their sins, especially if that person is a convert, like me.
2312. Having a warm conversation with an understanding priest who acknowledges humanity.
2313. A good penance given, something to help you change what you went in to confession to confess.
2314. An understanding priest who shows compassion as he addresses my specific concerns.
2315. Answers to questions and help with a problem.
2316. A priest sharing his personal experience with me.
2317. I've mostly had good experiences in the Sacrament, but the best has included a reminder of God's love for me in the midst of my sins.
2318. Priests who validate my feelings of sorrow for my sins and offer hope in return.
2319. When the priest seems to really connect with me and understands what I'm going through so that he can give me encouragement and advice for moving forward.
2320. A general confession and confessions in times of turmoil
2321. When I've gone to confession on a retreat.
2322. The times when the priest has taken time to talk with me and not just grant absolution.
2323. Reassurance from the priest that even the saints had weaknesses and fell short of perfect obedience.
2324. The absolution of sins
2325. I went after not going for 25 years. The priest was so happy he clapped his hands. We both laughed and smiled together. It was one of the sweetest moments of my life. I wanted to cry. His openness helped to bring me back into the fullness of my faith.
2326. Just this past Christmas, I had a wonderful experience with a family matter I was struggling with. Our pastor was so wonderful. It filled me with joy. Another time, a priest gave me personnel insight about a family member going through addiction, and I still remember his advice.
2327. When the Confessor suggested, not as a penance, that I attend daily Mass. It's become a decades long habit.

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2328. When the priest has given helpful and practical advice on how to overcome a repetitive sin.
2329. The opportunity to go face-to-face with a priest that knows me.
2330. When the priest has really conveyed God's mercy.
2331. The sense of peace after!
2332. It makes me feel lighter.
2333. Being able to talk through my sins and find hope.
2334. Feeling the weight and burden of sin lifted.
2335. Being able to speak without judgment. And be accepted in love.
2336. When the priest has given references or resources for me to follow up with to help me.
2337. When I've felt the weight lifted off my shoulders
2338. Getting a big sin off of my chest.
2339. Being able to go confession right before Mass.
2340. The awareness that my sins have been forgiven and the Lord loves me in spite of my sins.
2341. Happiness and giving a big sigh of relief afterward.
2342. When confession has been short, with no advice and absolution.
2343. Going when they used to have the confession booths where you didn't see the priest and they didn't see you.
2344. Having the priest listen to me and offer insights as well as absolution
2345. Feeling relief and being forgiven.
2346. After 20 years away from Holy Mother Church, I returned after Our Lady drew me back to our Lord. After a holy Franciscan Priest sat with me in an hour-long general confession, I truly became a new woman.
2347. Going to a priest who knows me outside of the confessional as well.
2348. A feeling of total healing.
2349. The welcoming spirit of the priest and a non-judgmental spiritual experience.
2350. The time I went to confess masturbation and the priest told me to rejoice that it was Easter season for my penance. I was confused and he explained to me I was to rejoice because I had come back home to God and the Church.
2351. When the priest questions and dialogues with you, showing he is trying to do more than get through with you.
2352. Group reconciliation services that really guided us to what was at the heart of the matter.
2353. Going face-to-face with a priest that I know.
2354. Walking away with a feeling like you've been freed of a heavy burden.
2355. I suppose being told "welcome back" after staying away for some 17 years or so. Then, in subsequent confessions, being able to unwrap and unravel so many sins that had lain dormant in my heart! Self-knowledge is a gift!
2356. Face-to-face Confession with a priest who provides counsel and support to be a better Christian.
2357. Communal celebration of the Sacrament, one that isn't legalistic, demanding "kind and number of times."
2358. I went to confession four weeks ago and the visiting priest helped me to grasp more fully the damaging effects of sin to my soul and to those in my life.

2359. A priest asked me if there was anything else on my chest that I wanted to talk about since I was there. It felt good to have Catholic catharsis!
2360. I detested the pastor and was not sure how to confess it. My Pieta book says to never ever question or say anything bad about any priest. The priest was kind and for my penance he commanded me to throw away that blue Pieta Book. He admitted that some priests are jerks. I left there tiptoeing on clouds.
2361. When I have felt I was listened to and questions were asked of me to explore my behaviors that lead to sin.
2362. To visit with a caring priest.
2363. When priests have understood my struggles, given me good insights and suggestions.
2364. When given release for the guilt at feeling I had to be a nun even though I really did not want to. The priest was fantastic.
2365. Getting a Hail Holy Queen prayer card.
2366. Forgiveness and knowing that God loves me and is willing to love me always.
2367. The times I've gone back after a long absence. I was fortunate to have a priest who lovingly welcomed me back and was kind while I cried.
2368. When a priest has been honest and helpful.
2369. When I've received insights from the priest. Also the relief from absolution
2370. When there has been loving and gentle dialogue coupled with guidance.
2371. When the priest looks at me with love despite my sins.
2372. When my sins have been forgiven
2373. When the priest showed genuine interest and compassion, clearly hearing my sins, and giving personalized feedback. When I didn't feel the responses were canned, even if the interaction was brief.
2374. Ninety-nine percent of my experiences have been positive. I've been lucky to have priests who act humbly and with great patience and kindness. That alone makes the experience positive for me.
2375. When the priest really listens and gets to the heart of the issue. When he connects the dots and sees what's really going on.
2376. When I'm able in a safe place to be honest about my life.
2377. I was in confession one time confessing conflict with a relative. I was sobbing almost inconsolably, when I felt the sensation that someone was standing over me, and started to feel a sense of peace. The confessor was my Spiritual Director at the time, so I asked him if perhaps he had stood up for some reason. He said he hadn't (which I was 99.99 percent sure of any way). It was then, that I knew for sure it was Jesus standing in front of me to console me! It was a beautiful experience, I will never forget!
2378. Face-to-face with my new confessor.
2379. Feeling the amazing power of God's mercy.
2380. When the priest tells me I've made a good confession. It is validating!
2381. Receiving absolution.
2382. The assurance that in spite of my sin, it is forgiven and I don't have to ask for forgiveness for that great sin again.
2383. The peace that I feel afterward
2384. When the priest gives some spiritual advice.
2385. When I have met an understanding and compassionate priest.

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2386. When the priest was sincere in discussing an issue with me. The times I was able to receive the sacrament under the trees at AbbeyFest. Also my most recent experience when the priest was so understanding and kind to me.
2387. When the priests listen and asks follow up questions to help me sort through the details.
2388. When I can have a face-to-face, meaningful conversation with the priest.
2389. When the priests demonstrate they are also pleased in showing up.
2390. When I've had a confessor with whom I can have some in-depth conversation, who is balanced, spiritually deep and joyful.
2391. My most recent experience this past Lent was the best experience. I had not been for a couple of years and felt called to go to Confession and deal with two matters that have been weighing on my mind. It felt very similar to receiving therapy, not just a recitation of how wrong or bad I have been.
2392. When priests give a penance with the intention to help with the problems confessed.
2393. When I've had a feeling of true forgiveness and a unity with Christ.
2394. I've experienced confessions a couple times with priests who clearly have some supernatural gifts in reading souls. Those unique experiences shed insight into my spiritual life, and led me to deeper reconciliation and relationship with our Lord. I also experienced a priest sharing with me his own struggles with the anger I shared with him. It was a profound encounter.
2395. I had a very kind, compassionate, and nonjudgmental confessor. When I started with, "It's been 24 years since my last confession," there was no recrimination for its being so long. He just listened, reminded me of God's love, and ended with a very warm, "Welcome back."
2396. I went once with a single, very specific item to confess, and the priest was kind, patient, understanding, and gave me good counsel on how and why these things may happen, and gently letting me off the hook. His kindness, patience, empathy, understanding, and good spiritual insight I'll never forget.
2397. The warmth and relief I've received, a chance to not always feel bad about myself.
2398. When I've gotten advice from a priest with an understanding of human nature.
2399. When I was heard and helped to understand what I really needed to convert.
2400. As I have grown in the Faith, I have become aware of attitudes and behaviors that I hadn't before confessed. So I made a huge general confession a few years ago. The priest was wonderful: no judgment, no comment on specific sins, just reassurance that this was all done, forgiven, and in the past. He encouraged me to go forward in peace and joy to rise above these sins.
2401. Once a priest gave me some wonderful counsel on how a very toxic person in my life was acting that way out of deep hurt, and how to deal with her drama in love and compassion rather than anger.
2402. My favorite confessor became a priest in mid-life after being widowed. He knew first-hand the challenges of marriage and family life, which made him all the more compassionate toward some of the struggles faced by his parishioners.
2403. When the priest and I speak a bit about my sins and how to improve.
2404. The relief that comes from reviewing and sharing my shortcomings.
2405. When the priest offers a little guidance as well as a good penance.

2406. When the priest actually seems to listen and his questions focus on what I just said and when he offers suggestions for new ways to approach old problems.
2407. When I confess heavy burdens, feeling unjudged.
2408. When I've had an insightful conversation with the confessor, a manifestation of God's love and mercy, prayer and peace.
2409. When the priest placed his hand on my head when he gave absolution and gave me encouraging advice on how to improve.
2410. When a monk heard my confession after a long period away from the Church.
2411. The opportunity to go face-to-face.
2412. A priest who listened, asked a couple of questions to understand better, and asked what I needed from God.
2413. When I felt understood, validated, and loved.
2414. When the priest encouraged me, reassured me of God's love, told me I had made a beautiful confession, and acknowledged my faith and desire for holiness. Since I prepare well for confessions, I have been very glad when priests are quick, quiet, and competent, giving me the needed grace of forgiveness.
2415. When the priest really listens and I can tell they give advice based on my specific issues that I bring up, not something generic.
2416. When I was challenged by the priest to do something in a political conflict I had, by the Grace of God, I was able to experience amazing consolation in doing the action, for God's greater glory!
2417. Sometimes the pastor takes the time to visit a little bit before confession.
2418. When I went to confession at San Giovanni Rotondo, the basilica of St Padre Pio.
2419. When a priest told me it sounded like I wasn't getting my needs met, and needed to care for myself in order to better serve others.
2420. A priest told me that I was special.
2421. When I have been honest and shared deeply, and the priest has received me and helped me to see the patterns of sin and grace in my life.
2422. Freedom from guilt.
2423. I was travelling around, visiting churches, one hot muggy Saturday. We entered a church and a priest was sitting in the ushers' pew at the back of the church. My husband and I look around, say our prayers and head out. I stop by the priest and ask him "When do you hear confessions?" "Right now!" he said, "Let me go tell my husband and I'll come back for confession." He said, "I'll be waiting in the confessional." It was the best confession I'd ever had because there was no stress.
2424. One priest asked me why I thought I committed certain sins and it led to a profitable (brief) discussion.
2425. I've had great experiences with the priests of Opus Dei.
2426. When the priest has actually listened to me. When the priest is glad I have come to be healed and not irritated to be in the confessional.
2427. I get very nervous so it's nice when the priest helps me remember what to do next.
2428. When I am met by my confessor with compassion and understanding. When we have a conversation. When he reminds me of God's infinite love and mercy. And when he gives me a scripture passage to pray with and meditate on that is directly related to what we talked about and that will help me with my struggles.

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2429. A confessor who had acknowledged a sense of sincerity and confirmed my good works and dispositions.
2430. When the priest gave me positive suggestions and advice.
2431. When I went to confession at St. Paul's outside the Walls near Rome. The confessor asked me if I was a pilgrim. Yes. I guess I am.
2432. When a priest helped me realize that some of the things I thought were sins were in fact not.
2433. When "the light finally comes on" and I realize something important about the nature of my sins or why a particular sin is troubling or troublesome. Also, when I have finally found relief from some sins.
2434. One particular evening, I was distraught and I went into the Abbey Chapel. I went into the confessional to hide and cry. It was hard to pray because I didn't really know how to pray at the time because I had only been Catholic for two years, but Jesus accepted my tears as a silent prayer I think. As I was crying, I felt Jesus's presence in a new way. It was as if He was sitting there in the confessional, just waiting for someone to come to Him. From that moment I could hear Jesus speak to me and feel His presence through the priest whenever I went to confession. Later I found out that priest are in persona Christi, so this experience makes sense to me.
2435. When the priest takes the time to offer insight, thoughts, and words of encouragement on how to overcome sin, to be better.
2436. When I find compassion and absolution.
2437. When a priest gently gave the church's position on a problem and encouraged that it was possible to live it.
2438. When I follow through on the firm purpose of amendment and penance afterwards.
2439. After coming back from a very hard life of substance abuse, the kind priest not only gave me reconciliation but anointing of the sick and communion in that order to fully heal my soul.
2440. When the confessor gives me good advice and a loving smile as I leave the confessional.
2441. When the priest really listened and helped me understand myself better and gave helpful spiritual advice.
2442. When I was able to engage in discussion regarding an embarrassing issue.
2443. The regular conversations with my confessor.
2444. When I used the same priest for a number of years and met face-to-face and received so much help and consolation.
2445. When I got advice about whether I am held to a higher standard than those with little or no religious training.
2446. Once, when I was overwhelmed with sorrow and remorse, I was crying while sharing my story. The confessor appeared to be attentively listening. A tremendous sense of peace and forgiveness flooded my being. Before the priest offered absolution, he admitted that because of my crying and other noises in the church, he didn't hear a word I said! But he gave me absolution any way. I knew God had forgiven me. That moment changed my life.
2447. When I have been able to go on my knees with a curtain or wall between myself and the priest. Having the priest give a fitting penance. Feeling really heard.
2448. Feeling forgiveness and compassion.

- 2449. At a Jesuit retreat house, the priest was so gentle and kind.
- 2450. The ones where I felt welcomed and relieved afterwards were the best.
- 2451. Outdoor confession at The Fest in Cleveland, surrounded by nature.
- 2452. A priest told me to ask God to help me get to the liturgy every weekend. I really like that he said to ask God for help, as opposed to "get your butt to Mass on the weekend."
- 2453. When I've received comfort, understanding, wisdom, and an experience of acceptance from the priest.
- 2454. When I was most sorry and the absolution I received tenderized and comforted my heart.
- 2455. Receiving relief from worries
- 2456. Just always glad to get it over with!
- 2457. When the priest knows who I am and I can hear the smile in his voice over something I say.
- 2458. Face-to-face confession either on retreat or in Lourdes, both immensely encouraging experiences with a priest who listened and cared.
- 2459. My best experience was when, through the very simple words of a priest saying 'God loves you,' the light went on in my heart at last after fifty years of searching to accept that love. Life-changing.
- 2460. Encouragement.
- 2461. Healing.
- 2462. I had a priest tell me "welcome back to the grace of God" after I returned to confession after a long period of time. It made me feel happy and glad instead of ashamed.
- 2463. When it's a priest close to me who I know well and can understand maybe what I need to change to correct habitual sin.
- 2464. Some of my confessions were very specific to given scenarios. The priests were able to give me advice and suggest Scripture passages, so I could learn more after my confessions.
- 2465. When I received advice to stop thinking, "I have to, or need to, say the rosary," and instead think, "I get to say the rosary."
- 2466. At times I have a sense of the Holy Spirit at work in how I express my sins and remorse and in how the priest responds.
- 2467. The tangible relief I've felt and the presence of Christ.
- 2468. All good experiences were marked with my priest's sense of humor and understanding.
- 2469. When the priest actually discusses with me my sins and why I do them instead of just going straight to absolution.
- 2470. Sometimes it is striking when the priest gives some good insight into my spirit.
- 2471. My first experience was best. Our parish priest was so kind, peaceful, and joyful. I felt welcome and safe, even as a second grade girl.
- 2472. When my confessor is very attuned to me and offers hope. Some of the most profound confessions for me have been in the Eastern Rite. I've had an experience twice when the priest has read my soul.
- 2473. Simple behind the screen confessions where either little was said or what was said was mysteriously and exactly appropriate to either my prayer life or outside life that had not been mentioned in confession. When I knew Christ was present in the priest.

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2474. Those times when my Confessor took the time to discuss how I can avoid sin in the future, or to offer comfort when I was distraught about the sins I had committed.
2475. When I've found understanding and encouragement.
2476. Being told I was not going to hell for being raped at a party.
2477. When the priest's kindness and understanding made me feel very heard.
2478. When the priest has been patient and hasn't rushed me and when he has also offered practical guidance and encouragement.
2479. I was an older mom with very young children and felt like a complete failure. I confessed my failures and poor work ethic in my previous career and as a homemaker. When I was done, there was a pause, then a small chuckle. This dear priest then told me of all his professional mediocrity before becoming a priest and was very comforting and loving. My husband came right after me and the same priest gave him a kick in the backside. We both got just what we needed. We still talk about confession that day. My best confession so far.
2480. My current pastor is a great listener and provides good insights. He is not judgmental and I feel comfortable discussing my sins and failings with him.
2481. When I was a boy, I remember the confessors were encouraging and positive.
2482. Finding out that what I thought was sinful had a positive spin to it.
2483. Receiving healing grace.
2484. With a priest who was loving and caring, who understood we all fail as humans.
2485. Open, honest communication and conversation with the priest helps me to realize that he is truly in persona Christi and it's really Jesus to whom I speak. I would never expect Jesus to say anything and then just absolve me of my sins, so when a priest takes a moment to express God's love and mercy to me, share some advice and show me that I'm loved despite my sins, it's a beautiful experience of encounter with Jesus. And one that isn't rushed yet doesn't feel like a lecture. Compassion, empathy, authentic Christ-like love is needed.
2486. When I'm able to go to a priest I know is nonjudgmental and whom I trust.
2487. When I have the chance to go during Eucharistic Adoration. I usually have to do it before Mass without much preparation or examination of conscience.
2488. When the priest uses Scripture, the Catechism, saint writings and experiences. And when they really listen.
2489. The kindness with which the priest responds to my sins.
2490. Being able to be honest and open with the one I am confiding in. I think we need not only to be able to say our sins but to be able to ask how I can rectify a broken relationship.
2491. Going face-to-face with a Jesuit priest.
2492. Being given a wonderful suggestion, that I should have realized myself previously: to pray for the person I had been having difficulty encountering.
2493. When I have been given practical guidance for changing sinful behavior, along with loving encouragement.
2494. Sitting face-to-face with a regular confessor and working on areas in which I want to do better, live better, relate more lovingly.
2495. Being able to have weekly confession if I wish. I can ask our priest any questions I may have and get a great answer.

2496. First, absolution and knowing that I am in a state of grace. Second, receiving insight about myself from the priest.
2497. Having a priest who can give some direction and offer a suggestion so I will be less likely to commit that sin again.
2498. The deep sense of peace and a greater appreciation of God's Love and Mercy.
2499. Priests who have given truth and encouragement in freeing me from shame, with wisdom with actionable steps to grow closer to the Lord.
2500. When the priest identifies with my struggles and gives me challenging but beautiful advice.
2501. When I went deep and really opened up.
2502. When I am listened to and advised well, being given thought prompting questions.
2503. When I've met kindness and compassion
2504. Going to the FSSP priests has changed my life! They are amazing confessors and take my spiritual life so seriously. Going to them has changed me as a wife and mother especially. They are true spiritual fathers!
2505. When a priest took the time to explain to me that a particular issue I was struggling with was not actually sinful.
2506. I struggle with being very legalistic. My best experiences happen when I'm able to get some feedback on handling it and focusing on God's mercy in moving forward.
2507. When priests have a willingness to really listen.
2508. I once had a face-to-face (not in the confessional) confession with a priest in which I confessed an affair. After hearing my story he said that he thought I needed not just forgiveness but healing. I felt affirmed by that.
2509. When the priest tells me that it is all right, that I'm on the journey, and that I will meet Jesus face-to-face someday, and not to give up on myself.
2510. When a priest is honest but merciful with me.
2511. When time was allotted for discussion, not just a rattling off of sins, face-to-face in the rectory office.
2512. My current confessor is best at hearing me in a nonjudgmental fashion. Most of all, he does not hurry me but allows healing to occur naturally. He does not argue with what I say, but accepts it. This is so important for a scrupulous person.
2513. My best experiences have been when the priest is obviously allowing the Holy Spirit to work through him, when he counsels me in a particular way that speaks directly to me. One confessor showed me God's persistent love and mercy even in the face of repetitive sin.
2514. When it's kept short and to the point.
2515. An understanding priest who told me it takes time to heal from sin and the after effects. I was consoled.
2516. My best experiences with the sacrament have been when I have planned the time to meditate on the Examination of Conscience, and the priest has given me the time to explain, and has listened and addressed my sins individually rather than in aggregate. I'm not looking for a whipping, but I do want all of my wounds to receive attention.
2517. When I have felt heard, not judged.
2518. Receiving kindness and compassion
2519. When the Priest talks to me about my sins.
2520. When the priest indicates the path to improve and not to repeat the mistakes

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2521. The sense of forgiveness I get when absolution is granted, because the priest showed an attitude of compassion and acceptance.
2522. The feeling of sin dropping off of me when I am given absolution.
2523. Having a comfortable relationship with the priest, someone who is real, not overly pious, a sinner like the rest of us.
2524. I was struggling with a repetitive sin for years. It was like the priest was down in the trenches with me and he was trying to get me out. He was super practical, and he was like, "Ok, you're going to beat this, and this is how you're going to do it." And thanks be to God, and to him, I did.
2525. Going the week before I was married was amazing. I felt so calm.
2526. When a priest told me that I had not sinned, but rather was just being human.
2527. When I received nonjudgmental words of love and understanding, forgiveness of the sins I was ashamed of, leaving the confessional and feeling the power of sanctifying grace.
2528. I go to a Jesuit university and so my confessors are the resident Jesuits who supply pastoral care to the college student population. The penances they have given me are really helpful and down to earth. Typically they hone in on what had bothered me most about the sin, such as not being able to feel like God still loved me. My penance was to remember that God still loved me, even when I fell. I am also devoted to the Blessed Virgin. The Jesuits always try to get to know my prayer life and religious and devotional habits. They usually incorporate this into the penance, too. For one confession, I identified that I felt no control over the sin, that sometimes I feel like I can't approach Jesus. The priest told me to imagine Our Lady guiding me to Christ.
2529. When I have felt empathy from the confessor.
2530. When, after decades of not going to confession, the priest asked me what I thought my sins were. I was uncatechized at the time and confessed only what I thought, at that time, were sins. Years later, I found out that a lot of what I was still doing was sinful. But I needed to come to that realization myself. Had he gone down a list and asked: did you do this? That? The other thing? I would have left, demoralized and unforgiven.
2531. When the priest takes the time to listen and offer advice, consolation, and a penance specific to my concerns.
2532. When a priest has used a sense of humor.
2533. When I've been treated like a human being.
2534. The priest saying hello and my name, being friendly and having a smile, offering a hand shake and sign of peace after the absolution.
2535. When the priest talks to me like he specifically cares about me like a father and truly wants the best for me.
2536. When the priest is fully engaged with me and is actively listening.
2537. When a priest understands my struggles and gives me solid advice to overcome my struggles.
2538. A priest who recognized a sin I confessed as a sign of an abusive situation and told me so.
2539. My parish pastor listened kindly, reminded me that the Holy Spirit helped me get there today, and was helping me to see the sins I'd confessed. Basically, he focused on

how God wanted me there in Reconciliation, and was leading me to notice what I'd confessed as a way of paying attention to how God helped me notice that.

2540. I love the feeling that comes with absolution. Leaving it all at the foot of the cross gives such relief. There is something physical about this sacrament that some folks don't understand.
2541. Feeling that I am listened to, not judged, forgiven.
2542. When the priest takes a moment for a word of kindness.
2543. Having my sins forgiven and being able to move on with my life.
2544. When I felt that it was an unburdening with hope for absolution from a priest that I respected and admired.
2545. The best experiences have been on retreats, since there is usually a longer period of time allotted per person. However, it really depends on the confessor and his ability to help me understand sins that I might not be aware of.
2546. Priests who listen and are sensitive to what you confess, no matter how grave the sin.
2547. When the priest took time.
2548. When the priest really shows the love and forgiveness of Jesus
2549. When the priest challenged me on why I've done what I've done, while also providing advice on how to not do it again.
2550. The understanding of a widowed priest. He had a better perspective on marriage.
2551. When I have received some counsel or wisdom to guide my life when I go to Confession. I know there is a need to keep confession time moving along, but just a moment to rest and not feel rushed in the confessional, to receive time for thinking, prayer, and clarity, has always been fruitful.
2552. When there's a good time allotted for confessions and multiple priests hearing them at the same time. Waiting hours (not an exaggeration) in the confessional line discourages confession
2553. When I feel the priest is happy to be there to offer care and compassionate guidance.
2554. I was having problems and the priest was very compassionate.
2555. Having experienced the understanding heart of the priest commissioned to grant me absolution and reconciliation with God and others.
2556. Having a priest whom I know I can trust.
2557. When I have received words of encouragement and been told I was loved.
2558. I did a semester in Rome and the priests gave great penances. One girl was told to make sandwiches to give to the poor next time she came into the city. I was told to pray a rosary with a friend or family member. It felt like it mattered that we went to confession. I didn't just say a Hail Mary and forget for the rest of my day.
2559. When a priest treats me kindly. I beat myself up enough. When a priest allows me to name and number my sins and absolves me of them in a brief but kind and patient way, I have peace.
2560. When the priest really listened, told me that some of what I was confessing was being overly scrupulous, and then gave me the perfect Bible verse to read as my penance.
2561. My experience throughout my life has been with Jesuits, who make me feel embraced and loved by Jesus and God. Confession with them is an uplifting experience. I lose myself within that divine embrace.
2562. When the priest listened a lot and gave me penance to meditate on a particular psalm.
2563. When priest listens and is compassionate.

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2564. To be challenged with love not condemnation.
2565. A priest made me cry with joy when he started by asking, "How can I show you that God loves you?"
2566. I've never had dramatic experiences with confession, but more a sense of peace.
2567. When a confessor is gracious.
2568. When I've encountered reverent, attentive priests.
2569. When I've been able to open up and be released from the hidden false self!
2570. My best experience has been the time my confessor told me that I was in confession because Jesus was not done making me saint just yet. Confession is obviously a vulnerable time, and this affirmation meant everything!
2571. Father forgave my spoken sins and all of my past ones!
2572. When I had a humble priest who challenged me to grow in my prayer life.
2573. When I was encouraged and not told that I am a permanent mortal sinner.
2574. When I was given advice for overcoming certain habitual sin, given clarification on whether a sin was mortal or venial, and compassion rather than condemnation.
2575. When talking with a priest that does not have weekly interactions with me.
2576. When I've gotten unconditional love and penances like, "Sit in front of the nativity scene and ask baby Jesus what three gifts He wants from you." His answers touched core of my soul.
2577. When a priest genuinely listened, walked me through a particular sin and taught me how to overcome it.
2578. When I confessed to my priest that I stole a pen. He offered to give me one and asked me to return the stolen one to the owner. I was just a kid in a boarding school many years ago. That was my best experience in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
2579. After confessing twenty years of pent up guilt and sin, my priest gave me penance and told me to stay for Mass and receive communion. I hadn't received communion for over twenty years. His exhortation was loving, non-judgmental. It was a happy day for me. I had missed the Lord.
2580. When I got someone who listened and told me how much God loves me.
2581. The priest's thoughtful and understanding replies.
2582. When the priest really knows me, and I feel that he doesn't judge me.
2583. When it seems that the priest is listening and gives sympathetic advice.
2584. On retreats.
2585. When a priest has encouraged me to see that sin doesn't have the last word.
2586. When the priest talks to me. Validates me. Listens. When he points me toward a passage of scripture or a book that would help me.
2587. Almost all of them are my best experiences, for I walk out forgiven, clean and ready to try again!
2588. Face-to-face confession with a priest that I did not know but who was able to show me so much mercy and love. The Holy Spirit was very present.
2589. When a priest prayed over me to begin the confession.
2590. When priests listen carefully and provide good feedback.
2591. A lovely Brazilian priest who congratulated me on an excellent Confession and another who thanked me for a very honest, humble Confession.
2592. The priest was a particularly good listener, asked a few questions and gave me what felt like a customized penance for my circumstances.

2593. There are too many to name, but the priest who made me laugh out loud was quite memorable. Another was when I came back to confession after 25 years. All the priest said was, "Welcome back."
2594. Being reassured that I am a child of God and hearing the words of Absolution.
2595. Meeting friendly priests who listen well and who don't make you feel rushed.
2596. Priests who understand, make you feel you have been doing your best, but sometimes fail.
2597. When I was worried about something, and was able to talk about it with the priest, receive absolution, and was given the command to "Go in peace."
2598. One on one with a priest knowledgeable of my "tender" conscience and obsessive-compulsive disorder.
2599. When the priest doesn't rush, listens, asks questions, and offers pertinent advice.
2600. The time when I had tears of sorrows when hearing absolution, knowing I can do better.
2601. When the priest is not in a hurry, or does not show it.
2602. When I received forgiveness and advice that told me that God was speaking to me through a man.
2603. I am so grateful when the confessor tells me that mine was a 'good' confession, one that came from thorough examination of conscience. This is encouraging to me to continue praying a daily, honest examination of conscience.
2604. When I have had confessors who adhere to the dogma and doctrine of the faith.
2605. On a few occasions, I've felt an actual physical catharsis. I was trembling so hard going in, and at some point during the confession, my whole body relaxed and got heavy. It's hard to describe why that felt like a peaceful, real presence of God, but it did.
2606. When Father delved deeper and asked thoughtful questions about what I shared, and answered my responses with such compassion and love, acknowledging burdens I had been carrying along with these sins and tendencies.
2607. When the priest made me feel comfortable through his humility.
2608. A couple of years ago, I explained that I was, and had been, depressed for no reason and am treated for anxiety. All of it cleared the moment the priest said that it was the devil trying to make me unhappy. Amazing!
2609. When I am really listened to, not talked over.
2610. After nine years away from the sacrament, the priest just smiled and said, "Welcome back." My penance was to humble myself enough to ask a non-family member for help with my kids so my husband and I could go on a date.
2611. During a directed retreat when the confessor was my director.
2612. A priest who was kind, soft-spoken, and gave me a prayer card of Padre Pio to assist in my prayers.
2613. When I've been able to talk to the priest face to face.
2614. When the confessor treats it like a conversation rather than a list of things to do.
2615. At the Jesuits' Loyola Retreat House in Morristown, NJ.
2616. When the priest doesn't judge me, but asks questions that help me understand my behavior better so that I don't repeat it.
2617. When the priest takes the time to understand and talk about the confession.
2618. When a priest asked questions.

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2619. With a Capuchin at the Mall in Colorado Springs.
2620. I went to a youth camp where we did home repairs and then came together to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a group and then privately with the confessors. It was one of the most beautiful experiences with Reconciliation that I've had because it emphasized our striving as a community to emulate better the teachings of Jesus.
2621. When there's been a real conversation, and a feeling of being welcomed with real concern for my welfare.
2622. Before becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, I went to a wonderful priest. He erased all my fears and feelings of being unworthy.
2623. In 1968 I confessed to using God's name in vain. I was ten. The priest told me I had no idea how to use God's name in vain intentionally, and explained.
2624. Once, a long time ago, I just walked in to the pastor's office and we had what felt like a chat. It was totally spontaneous. I wasn't even afraid as I usually am.
2625. When I have experienced understanding and compassion from one human being to another
2626. When I've gotten specific guidance for a difficult sin that I keep confessing
2627. When I was less than ten years old, I used foul language at a sleepover. Upon receiving this report, my mother dragged me to my parish's rectory for a forced celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The blessing was provided after the priest kindly told me that using colorful language is not a mortal sin and not the end of the world, but that I should be mindful of context and audience and always exercise self-control. This experience was a profoundly helpful one in bringing me into the church. My mother was disappointed when I gave her the readout afterwards, but the type of feedback I received along with this sacrament was invaluable in helping me develop a concept of the Church as a welcoming and forgiving place for all people.
2628. The joy of being spiritually healed and strengthened for a new day.
2629. The very best was on my return to confession after decades away from the sacrament. It was very emotional with lots of tears and the priest could not have been more comforting and welcoming. That has kept me coming back to confession on a regular basis ever since.
2630. When I am able to go with my spiritual director.
2631. The reconciliation chapel (English speaking) at Lourdes. The floor to ceiling glass and light naturally offer a space of freedom, joy, openness, healing, and God's light. Also, the priest clearly chose to be present and give of us his time. It was not rushed or a meeting of a limited time. I shared my wounds and choices and knew they would be received with the time and grace due to them.
2632. The best experience is when I'm given common sense suggestions for improvement and reassurances of God's mercy and love.
2633. Knowing that the priest is a friendly, prepared human being who knows what I am talking about.
2634. When I've been able to have face-to-face conversations with the confessor.
2635. There have been times when I faced the truth about a sin I had not recognized, and the priest was helpful and honest. It was very refreshing.
2636. When the priest assures me of God's mercy and forgiveness and that I can start again.

2637. With a priest who gives good advice.
2638. When I have confessed a serious sin and the priest took the time to talk with me about it.
2639. When I am able to spend enough time with the confessor to explain my conscience and allow him to guide my spiritual path.
2640. The priest at my college campus (years ago) had a knack for listening and made me feel like he cared. I never felt like he was going through the motions.
2641. Being listened to with compassion, not feeling rushed, and receiving suggestions for how I can do better next time.
2642. Returning to confession after twenty-five years. The priest was very understanding and kind. Afterward he said, "Good night, my friend." I heard Mother Angelica say days later on TV the priest is in persona Christi in the confessional. And I realized Our Lord was calling me His friend and I so wanted to be. That confession gave joy to my heart and took my life to a higher level of spirituality. After I began to go to daily Mass.
2643. When I felt like I remembered everything I wanted to say and was encouraged by the confessor.
2644. When I've had an understanding confessor, who listens and responds.
2645. I always feel good, refreshed and renewed after confession.
2646. Once I had a priest actually lay his hands on my head when absolving me of my sins and the grace felt very tangible in that experience.
2647. When confession has been more like a conversation instead of a detailing of transgressions.
2648. When I had a priest who was humble and able to reduce my tensions and allowed me to find a safe place to open up about my offences against my God.
2649. Feeling blessed.
2650. The peace of mind believing my sins have been forgiven and I can start over with a clean slate.
2651. Realizing God's love for me
2652. I remember feeling so uplifted as though I was floating on air.
2653. I had a scrupulous conscience. I liked it when the priests asked for anything else that might bother me and I could mention things I didn't think were sinful but bothered me.
2654. There have been times when I was confused or concerned and the priest was able to help and direct me. There was a true sense of joy and peace after confession
2655. When the priest said that I made a good and honest confession, and that I should never be afraid to come to confession because Jesus waits for me with open arms.
2656. My best experience was my first time because the priest got me to relax.
2657. The feeling of renewal
2658. I was only an Easter and Christmas Catholic for many years but came back through the Catholics Returning Home program. The confession after all that time was such a welcoming experience. I cried through the whole thing and the priest was so helpful and understanding.
2659. When a priest suggested a different name for the root of my sins. I was thinking "pride" or "envy." When he suggested the root might be "anger," it opened a whole

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new understanding and led to some exploration of how to look at my actions through a different lens.

2660. A confession on a retreat when a priest suggested I reflect because there was a forgiveness I was holding back. I realized I needed to forgive the Catholic Church! This experience brought me back fully into my Catholic Faith in a new way.

## **Have you had any difficult experiences in Confession? What made them difficult?**

2661. No so far!
2662. They say every priest has "heard it all," but sometimes priests don't hear sins calmly, and get angry. That's the worst. Sometimes they even seem to try to emphasize how terrible the sins are, rather than emphasizing God's saving power through the Sacrament.
2663. Yes, when the priest felt birth control was not a sin.
2664. I mistakenly asked for guidance and counseling.
2665. Yes, an unduly harsh priest.
2666. I think sometimes priests can be very difficult in the confessional. They give harsh penances and can make you feel bad by what they say sometimes. Sometimes it seems as if the priest is bored or doesn't want to do it.
2667. When the priest made me feel ashamed.
2668. Experiences where I was told I was telling the priest "faults" rather than sins.
2669. I used to have to go when I was little and confessed to a guy who later turned out to be a sex offender. I felt dirty for years.
2670. A priest simply spoke down to me and added to the difficulty of confessing by confronting me with a negative manner or exaggerating the penance for a less serious sin.
2671. When a priest was "preachy." I know what I did wrong; that's why I just confessed it. It is not a time for a homily.
2672. When I was rushed
2673. One priest asked me if the sexual act was as a passive or active role.
2674. One priest asked me when I was 15 and confessed masturbation: "Why would you want to do that?" I was speechless. When your 15, you're very full of hormones. Duh.
2675. My new confessor seems much more legalistic. I just missed monthly confession for the first time in ten years. I'm discerning what God would have me do.
2676. When I've been spoken to as a young girl despite the fact that I'm a grown man.
2677. When I've had confessors who were just going through the motions.
2678. When I was told I couldn't receive the sacrament because I was remarried without an annulment.
2679. All the times when it just seemed rote and the priest just went through the motions.
2680. When the confessor is really not 'present' with me as an individual.
2681. I have been very fortunate to have had only good experiences. I get nervous but that's not unusual I think.
2682. One priest only allowed face-to-face Confessions. I tried to confess with my eyes closed and he told me to look at him while I was confessing.... awkward
2683. Lack of warmth. Lack of connection.

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2684. During a confession, one priest's advice was not only harsh, but made it seem as if the situation was my fault. Instead of feeling absolved, I left feeling worse and more guilty.
2685. I have a priest whose conservative views make me hesitate toward the sacrament. He will give me good advice only to later contradict it during his homilies. I don't expect priests to be perfect, for I know they are human, but after hearing his views in his homilies, I'm left feeling confused.
2686. I was going to a priest at a conference who seemed to have his own agenda. First he told me that my sin wasn't really a sin (I'm truly not scrupulous, but it would certainly be classified as venial, and related to my own inclinations rather than something objectively wrong. Still!) And then for absolution he took it as a teaching moment to explain that I could forego a prayer of my choosing to say the Jesus prayer just before absolution. Honestly, it just seemed like the process was about him.
2687. I had taken my ten year old daughter on a Good Friday. The priest, I assume elderly and hard of hearing, could be heard responding to her, and then berating her for not having the act of contrition memorized, from a solid ten feet away. Then her penance for her 10-year-old sins was to memorize the act of contrition and pray three decades of the Rosary. Wow.
2688. A priest once seemed disgusted by my sins. A separate time a priest was extremely unsympathetic to the challenges of modern day parenting.
2689. I have never had difficulty in Confession.
2690. I received harsh comments that felt like judgment instead of forgiveness
2691. One priest physically hit me during confession. Another accused me of lying about my living situation.
2692. Experiences with bored, tired, angry priests who probably themselves rarely frequent the sacrament.
2693. When the priest judged me. It made me not want to go to confession ever again.
2694. When the priest is loud, it makes me uncomfortable, thinking that he is being overheard outside the confessional.
2695. My regular confessor is a missionary. One time I went to another confessor and told him my sins. He gave me penance and absolution and we were done. The whole thing was minutes, max. Compared to my other experience described above with my regular confessor, I didn't even feel like I had obtained absolution.
2696. When I was a kid, this one priest was always yelling at kids in confession.
2697. I felt rushed, even though I told the priest it was my first confession after becoming catholic 25 years ago.
2698. I've had more bad confessions than good. It was bad when a priest didn't listen to what I was saying and tried to make me feel bad and change my life choices. I explained that I was getting divorced (because my husband abused me) and I had one priest tell me to read this Marriage 911 book and that I shouldn't get divorced. Another priest told me it was very wrong to get divorced despite my saying more than once if I stay married I would commit suicide. He made my penance to go to marriage counseling! Another priest told me he didn't think my son was gay (he is). He thinks it was a phase and I should take him to see a priest but told me not to take him to a "gay priest and you can figure out who they are."
2699. The priest's words made me feel like I was going to hell. In 6th grade!

2700. After explaining my sins ( which were sins), the priest wrapped it all up by saying something like, "If there is sin here," minimizing what I had just said. He probably meant to reassure me but I would have preferred him to acknowledge my sin as I was doing.
2701. The confessions I made in one parish, where the confessional is also the parish broom cupboard, with ladders and mops. It suggests that the priest and community have given up on confession and had found a better use for the space.
2702. The very worst confession was with a priest who was also my boss. He listened to my sins and then pointed out some others he thought I should have mentioned. It became a staff appraisal.
2703. A priest once suggested I buy a book in his gift shop. It made me smile. He was a great fundraiser.
2704. I was told I should only tell my "list of sins" and not take too long because others are waiting and we only have 30 minutes for Confession before Mass for the whole Parish). I was criticized and admonished for the amount of time since my last confession. I was cut off in giving my confession and the disallowed my explanation. It felt like the Confessor didn't listen and that my dignity wasn't considered.
2705. When a priest asked too many questions and I got scared, he then acted as though he was bored.
2706. When I went to a priest who seemed detached, absent, uncaring.
2707. When I have felt judged. The priests know me personally and my family. I don't think they look at me the same after sharing my experiences. At times they've asked, "Is that it?," as if I wasn't sharing everything or that what I was concerned about wasn't important.
2708. Many! When shame and blame and judgment overwhelmed the forgiveness the Sacrament is meant to offer. When going face-to-face, the priest looked down and almost never made eye-contact. When his terse words, tone and affect on the face showed disapproval and impatience.
2709. The priest was in a hurry and never gave me enough time to finish my sins.
2710. The priest was very rude and made me feel ashamed. At some point that I swore never to return.
2711. The priest asked so many questions.
2712. I was told once that I did not need the sacrament. What a very unpleasant response.
2713. I was not granted absolution.
2714. It was rushed and confusing.
2715. I dislike the feeling that the priest is just trying to get me out the confessional as soon as possible.
2716. When priests have pushed for more information, particularly about "impure thoughts." I really don't want to go into detail.
2717. In 8th grade, I was yelled at by the priest. All my classmates heard. It was humiliating.
2718. When I try to recite the act of contrition, anxiety takes over and I struggle to remember.
2719. With confessors who have wanted only to do behind the screen confessions and seem to make a mental to do list instead of being present.
2720. Not feeling heard. Feeling like I was no different than anyone else and that my confession was something that had to be rushed through.

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2721. When a priest dismisses my sins as "not that bad," it's disheartening.
2722. None, thank God!
2723. Only a few times did I leave feeling better. Not sure why that is. I'd love to feel renewed.
2724. I had an Asian priest who asked me a question. I asked him to repeat it three times and then just decided to say yes. He gave me absolution.
2725. I was rushed by a priest who had to get ready for Mass. I try to keep my confession brief and to the point but in the rush, I neglected to make a good confession.
2726. My pastor at my last penance made me feel like he was in a hurry to finish quickly.
2727. I went into a confessional when I was in my early 20s. I told the priest my sins. He then went on to ask me if I had read any bad books or seen any dirty movies. Those questions had nothing to do with anything I said. It actually traumatized me. I did not go back to confessions for at least a year. I also made sure I knew something about the priest I was about to have hear my next confession.
2728. I had a priest pry into my details, seemingly looking for sexual sins. I felt violated and would never confess anything of that nature to a human being again.
2729. When I had to convince the priest something was in fact sinful.
2730. I once went to a priest who didn't say a word the entire time until the penance and absolution. I liked that for a while because I felt safe saying anything, but it was strange not to be acknowledged or welcomed.
2731. I had a priest who talked a lot, dismissed my sin, and told me not to be so hard on myself. I am scrupulous so, "Don't be so hard on yourself" is not only very difficult, it's confusing. I wonder whether I take my sin seriously enough, and the scrupulosity cycle starts over.
2732. An experience of a priest who didn't pay attention. I was once absolved of the sins of the teenager who went before me!
2733. The priest acted as if I bored him.
2734. Whenever the priest is cold, or clearly judgmental.
2735. Feeling judged. Getting a sense that the priest would rather be doing something else. Not really being heard.
2736. As a pre-Vatican II child, confession was forced by my parents, and was terrifying and humiliating. Being sent into a little dark closet with an invisible man behind a wall is the stuff of nightmare for kids.
2737. When a priest was judgmental rather than hopeful.
2738. Telling the truth and putting my very being into the moment and only receiving a blank stare back.
2739. The priest pried for more details on my sins. He was like a voyeur rather than a confessor. I was very uncomfortable with his questions.
2740. The Monsignor who gave me the penance to "do your wifely duties, always." That ruined the experience for me and made me cry.
2741. The priest who used alternative or invalid words at absolution. This is literally all I go for and the priest decides to be clever, which means I now have to think and pray whether I am actually absolved. I hate this.
2742. A priest has corrected the way I said my sins. He wanted me to say each sin and how many times I had committed it. It felt like an inventory instead of a conversation.

2743. When I know the priest. I know they are bound by the seal of Confession but it still bothers me.
2744. Going face-to-face.
2745. So far, I've not experienced any difficulty.
2746. One young priest recognized my voice and never looked at me the same. Another priest after confession seemed to view me with disgust, and I didn't confess anything that bad. I don't think all priests are cut out to be confessors.
2747. When the priest said I was not sorry for my sins and refused me absolution.
2748. I had always been told as a kid in Catholic school that through the Sacrament of Confession God would forgive any sin, there was no sin too big. When I was in college I was in a bad relationship and things went further than I wanted them to and I was afraid that the encounter might lead to pregnancy. I went to a doctor the next day and took the morning after pill. After this I felt so much shame and regret, both about failing to stop the encounter and about the choice to take that pill, thinking about the life that I might have ended with that choice. It is still the decision I regret most today. It was scary to go to Confession. I felt so ashamed. During confession (behind the screen), the priest said that he could not grant me absolution because I was living in the "near occasion of sin." That was one of the most painful moments of my life. I left in tears. It hurt so much that when I most needed God's forgiveness and had felt more sorrow for my actions than ever before, that I was turned away. I felt so much pain from this that for a time I considered leaving the Church. For years after that I was afraid to go to Confession, and sometimes cried with fear as I was waiting in line. I still have to overcome a lot of fear to go to Confession and dread and fear another experience like that.
2749. A priest who didn't really listen and was impatient. I left feeling misunderstood and uncared for.
2750. Feeling judged by the priest's expression and words, making the pain of sin worse.
2751. Being told to hurry up.
2752. Being told that cursing is not a sin, despite the fact that words that hurt a person and the person's character are not being God like.
2753. Sadly, a few. Priests who have made it clear they'd rather be elsewhere. Those who have ridiculed and chastised without love. Those who seemed indifferent.
2754. Personally, no. However, I have heard friends express their displeasure in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, mostly because of a priest's nasty or pompous attitude.
2755. It is a vulnerable experience always, but it is sometimes made more difficult without a screen. I find it difficult when a priest changes the script or tries to make it a more casual experience. I once had a priest try to skip right to the act of contrition before I had a chance to tell him my sins.
2756. A priest who became judge and jury, refusing to recognize a human in front of him who was struggling with repeatedly sinning in the same way.
2757. Talking to a priest who didn't know me was the most difficult. He was kind, but I left feeling something a bit hollow and shallow.
2758. When I feel judged or I feel that I can't say what I feel.
2759. I'm always nervous but nothing difficult has ever happened.
2760. Perhaps, over the years, if I didn't connect with my confessor. But it's also humbling to confess the same things over again...

2761. I have had a confessor push me repeatedly regarding sexual sin. I confessed my sin, its gravity and number, and the confessor didn't seem to be able to let it alone. It seemed as though he believed I was withholding information and this really exacerbated the difficulty of being open and vulnerable in confession. My sin was suddenly no longer a matter between me and Christ, but instead morphed into an uncomfortable, mistrusting conversation between myself – a young woman already dealing with the shame of divulging details about my sexual experience – and an older man. It's hard enough to bring that to confession. I left feeling... icky.
2762. Priests acting as judge and not being charitable. They are the reason folks don't go to confession and I believe the sins of those scared away from confession are on the souls of priests that cause that fear.
2763. One small town priest appeared judgmental. The good ones seem to use it as a way to learn more about the human condition and grow themselves
2764. I have not, but my wife had one. She went in and confessed her sins and was not granted absolution and was told she was going to hell. This was a while ago.
2765. I struggle with scrupulosity and I've had priests tell me that if I don't use the old Latin act of contrition, I'm not serious and won't be forgiven
2766. A priest chastised me in confession when I was a child, maybe 10. I was afraid to be honest in confession for a few years after that.
2767. When a priest has belittled what I feel I needed to confess.
2768. Times when I felt like the priest was being judgmental about the things I had confessed.
2769. Every experience was difficult. I saw a sign today advertising confession at a nearby church and was repelled by it.
2770. When the priest was harsh.
2771. A priest sounded upset and condemnatory at my sin. It scared me away from the sacrament. I am still scared to confess.
2772. What is most difficult is to confess the sins I am most ashamed of. I prefer a priest who does not know me if those times ever crop up.
2773. One priest's body language seemed like he did not believe in sin and repentance. He did not use the correct formula for absolution
2774. A priest stood us up. I wanted to receive sacrament at a First Friday service. I got there early with another couple. Priest did not give himself enough time, because he was out to dinner with friends.
2775. Multiple times when a confessor was much more intent upon "delivering his solution" to the issues rather than actually listening to what I said.
2776. One priest did not use the correct form of absolution prayer. (He said, "Jesus and I forgive you.") Two priests said they did not know the absolution prayer when I asked them to please say it. ("God the Father of Mercies") but at least they said, "I absolve you."
2777. One priest told me for my penance that I had to try not to do the sins I had confessed. It is understood when I go to Confession that I am to try not to commit those sins. One of my sins was procrastination. So in order to fulfill the penance, was I supposed to do paper work everyday, even on Sundays? For how long? A week? A month? There were a few other things. I told Father I would try not to commit the sins but could he please assign another penance. He refused. The penance became very stressful for me

and I had to go to another priest to have the penance lifted. It was too much of a weight, a burden for me to carry. I cried during my next Confession. That priest was so kind and understanding. He removed the burden, the penance from me.

2778. I've suffered from the in-and-out mentality of priests, who feel pressured by people waiting in line.
2779. Various sterile, rote incidents in confessionals.
2780. Being rushed through confession.
2781. Forty years ago, after confessing about marital problems, the priest went outside to smoke a cigarette. He eyed me up and down when I exited the church. I didn't go to confession for 20 years after that.
2782. Most difficult is my propensity to make the same mistakes although I strive to improve. It is difficult to confess the same thing twice.
2783. One time a priest absolved my sin but didn't use the proper form at all. He basically said I was forgiven and may go. This made me uncomfortable and I believed that the confession was invalid. So I went to another parish and had to repeat the confession.
2784. I had a priest actually say, "Is that all you have to say?" I went back the next day to another priest.
2785. Facing a spiritual turning point in my life, I turned to a priest for insights. He told me with absolute conviction what I must do. But I reminded him that he did not know me, why I was in this situation, and why I had doubts. I found a much older confessor whose wisdom helped me make a peaceful decision that has worked well in my life for fifty years now.
2786. There was a priest, popular in my parish who did a lot more talking than listening. After a couple of frustrating experiences, I simply stopped going to him.
2787. I had a Priest ask for uncomfortable levels of detail about certain sins.
2788. I've had some unpleasant experiences with clerical priests who are more focused on a prescriptive, mechanical sacrament rather than an empathetic ear focused on true healing and forgiveness
2789. I do not like being forced to confess face-to-face. I want the old style confessional back!
2790. Only getting rushed through, like we were both rushed for time and I was merely getting my ticket stamped for showing up.
2791. Some of my difficult experiences were being rushed, being given theologically incorrect advice and being chastised.
2792. Confessing the same sin as I feel like a hypocrite. Can't seem to overcome one sin.
2793. The only difficulty for me to discuss my mistakes.
2794. I have sometimes avoided confession if I do not trust the confessor to consider my situation holistically.
2795. Being yelled at.
2796. When I was in my 40s I joined my son when he went for First Reconciliation. Confessions were face-to-face. I went to a young priest in the parish. After confessing my sins, he began berating me and raising his voice. I was so upset that I have not been to confession since that date.
2797. Only when the priest is rushed or dismissive of my sins.
2798. My only difficult experience was self-induced. I have had one experience in the confessional where my contrition was shallow and I think the priest sensed that. He required that I unpack in some depth the sins I was confessing but that I was rushing

- past because I was either afraid of those sins or I was trying to rush through them because I was so embarrassed. That experience was hard, but necessary.
2799. The perception of being judged and misunderstood.
2800. The priest not really listening to what I was trying to say.
2801. Not sticking to the traditional format. Treating it like a therapy session.
2802. When I expressed liberal views on Catholic social issues, the priest threatened to not give me absolution. This turned a 15-minute session into an hour. I was traumatized. I learned how vulnerable a very strong 81-year old woman can be. I've been Catholic all my life, educated in a Catholic university, sent my sons to Jesuit schools. This priest devastated me! I may never go to confession again.
2803. Only one time. The priest reprimanded me because I said I prayed that a person would forgive me for something I did, and he said, "It's God I need to forgive me. That's why I was in the confessional.
2804. I was given too much advice. One good piece of advice is enough to try to remember!
2805. I'm female. Most of the things I've wanted to confess are sexual. It feels completely unnatural to discuss my sexuality with a celibate older man. It feels perverted and unnatural at worst and I feel exposed. And I'm focusing on the priest and whether he might enjoy the memory of a beautiful young girl talking to him about sex. I can't focus on the sacrament at all because of that.
2806. When I cannot understand the priest, because of his accent or logic. Sometimes the process is like a factory with many people.
2807. Disinterest on the part of the confessor.
2808. I personally have not.
2809. With an impatient priest.
2810. When the priest seems disinterested. When I have asked for confession and the priest says come back during confession hours.
2811. Scheduling is difficult and it just makes me so anxious. That room is scary. Everything about it just makes me so anxious. Although I do feel better after being absolved.
2812. Confession is difficult because I find it difficult to verbalize to someone else the ongoing conversation I have with God.
2813. I was at World Youth Day in 2002 when I was 36, and they had little outdoor cubicles for confession. It was loud and hard to hear, and the priest wanted me to confess some more deep or salacious things I guess. At one point he said, "Don't give me any of that sh\*t." I was really confused by his behavior, and didn't understand what I had done wrong. I should have just gotten up and left.
2814. I have had a few confessors who I'm pretty sure told me things that were not in line with Catholic teaching or maybe even heresy.
2815. Multiple occasions when priests failed to use a valid form of absolution, forcing me to haggle for it.
2816. A priest at first refused to offer absolution and I had to persuade him to do so. My offense was not serious or hurtful to anyone.
2817. As a child, embarrassment. As an adult, sometimes finding the right words to explain. At times feeling shame
2818. I recently got divorced and I have felt a little distanced from the Church and the confessional since then. I know this is self imposed but the feeling is still there.
2819. Just the usual embarrassment of having to name sins out loud.

2820. The problems are with me. I tend to be jittery and forget the Act of Contrition. The lights signaling my turn can be nerve-wracking! But I've been fortunate. I've had only two dud experiences since my confirmation 16 years ago, and nothing that serious, just a couple of bores who went through the motions and nothing else.
2821. Not being able to communicate clearly because of language divide.
2822. Priests who have scolded or intimidated without trying to understand. This is not to say a priest can't challenge, but he should not belittle or patronize.
2823. I was abused by a priest when I was in the 8th grade. I went to Catholic school and told another priest at confession. His answer to me was that the abusive priest was just a man. I will never forget it.
2824. I had a priest at Saint Peter's Basilica who accused me of lying to him when he didn't hear me. But I think English wasn't his first language so he didn't understand me.
2825. Yes, when a young order priest asked about masturbation.
2826. I'm uncomfortable when priest comments on how long it has been "since my last confession." I hope to feel confident that as long as I am there, it is enough.
2827. My anxiety makes it difficult.
2828. I still have memories from childhood of being yelled at by the priest and often hearing him yell at others loud enough for the whole church to hear. It has been a deterrent for me for a long time
2829. I had a priest insist on counseling for a sin. Counseling may have been helpful, but he wanted agreement that I'd seek counseling prior to absolution. I confessed an embarrassing sin and wasn't comfortable seeking out a counselor.
2830. I was and am scared of most priests so almost every experience has been difficult.
2831. Remembering my sins.
2832. Reciting the same list all the time.
2833. Trying to figure out what to say.
2834. I always cry during confession and I feel awkward with this. I'm in my 70s and have always been like this. These days my sins are small but they seem to be relentless
2835. When I receive the sacrament face-to-face, I get nervous and forget what I wanted to confess so I start to wonder and feel awkward. I think I make it more difficult assuming that the priest thinks I'm not prepared
2836. Not since we had to go in grade school 70 years ago or so. It was hard to try to remember how many times I did something.
2837. Just when, rarely, the priest says nothing and seems not involved or interested at all.
2838. I haven't felt very comfortable speaking all my sins to the priest, because they seem too silly and unimportant.
2839. Face-to-face is hard to be completely honest, with the complication of personalities and embarrassment.
2840. Only when the priest seems inattentive.
2841. Some priests were perfunctory, but no truly difficult experiences.
2842. When the priest expresses the gravity of the sin without giving any recourse.
2843. I once had a priest scold me for not coming in a year. I was in college. Later he told my mom it must have been a visiting priest, not him.
2844. Only when I got so nervous that I could not remember the Act of Contrition, which I say every night.
2845. At times, when I have not prepared well in advance.

2846. One time I confessed a same-sex sexual sin. Then the priest asked me details about anal intercourse and if that is what I did. It was very awkward.
2847. Once a priest scolded me to "get to the sin" and asked, "What is the sin?" Confession is about sin. He seemed impatient.
2848. My last confession experience, I felt extra pressure from the priest to conform to the image he "saw" of my relationship with my husband when I asked for forgiveness for a sin against my husband.
2849. Confession is generally difficult. It requires a person to admit they are not "good" all the time or they have failings. An apparent "lack of humanity," even if only imagined, on the part of the confessor can make it even more difficult.
2850. My most difficult experiences have been when I go to a priest I do not know. For a penance asking me to get more involved in church, when I am very active in church, overwhelmed me.
2851. I was once denied absolution and the priest was obnoxious. If I'd done what he told me to do, it would have been extremely harmful to me and to others. I'd been describing problems in my relationship with my parents (this was in my 20s), and now I recognize that I was blaming myself for things that weren't even my fault. But he decided that the only thing that would work would be if I told my parents I would not speak to them again unless they did certain things that I knew they would not be able to do or comprehend. I told him that all that would do is create more pain in the whole situation, and I couldn't see it helping anything. He told me that if I was unwilling to do that, I clearly wasn't serious about changing. I am so glad that I had the presence of mind to know he was wrong and to just end the encounter and leave instead of giving in, but I think someone younger or more deferential to clergy might not have. I was more appalled later that he was so heavy-handed and inclined to overstep what I think he had competence in – I was seeing a therapist at the time, and he knew that – than I was about being denied absolution. I felt like he was somehow reveling in the power he had in that encounter. And actually, shortly after that, it came to light that he had been soliciting sex from people (men, so I wasn't in danger myself) during confession and presenting this as something that would somehow help them. I was appalled with myself for ever having thought highly of him. Mostly, though, experiences with this sacrament aren't "difficult." If anything, they're just kind of blah and meaningless. If it goes well, it can be very powerful, but that seems more the exception than the rule.
2852. On a rare occasion I may have disagreed with something the priest said, but I have not had a difficult time.
2853. Harsh judgment by the priest.
2854. Once a priest sat in front of me, eyes closed, hands folded across his chest, and constantly asked me, "Is that it?"
2855. Once a priest seemed upset because I forgot some words while reciting the act of contrition. I apologized, and he almost flung a pamphlet at me to read aloud. Afterward, I felt very ashamed.
2856. Confession can be difficult when it feels dry and when I'm not as sure what to say.
2857. The only difficulty is with myself, admitting that I have sinned.
2858. One confessor was argumentative and judgmental and another did not grant absolution. I won't be going back.

2859. Once in a while it's a little rushed
2860. It's difficult for me if it doesn't feel private enough.
2861. One priest said something along the lines of "don't worry about your sins, you're only human." That's terrible advice to be telling people. Fortunately I knew enough to ignore it but he likely led a lot of people astray.
2862. I don't know what to do or say and I've been Catholic my whole life.
2863. It is not always a spiritual experience, sometimes just rote from childhood.
2864. It's difficult when a priest seems to be trying to speed through, unless it's Holy Week or Advent and there are 25-30 people waiting. I also have a difficult time knowing how detailed I should be.
2865. Once I felt like I was being accused, accosted by one priest. I felt worse afterwards.
2866. Sometimes, it has felt like the priest wasn't very interested.
2867. As a child, just the fear. I was scared to death the first time.
2868. Priests that are in a hurry who rush you when there is no line or reason for it. It's in a flippant way.
2869. I had a priest guess my sins. He guessed them wrong and I agreed and it made me so uneasy that I had to go to confession again to confess properly.
2870. Yes, several: when a priest assumed the worst; a priest making me promise to return in a month; a priest telling me I'm selfish because of a mean-spirited relative; and more.
2871. I have had my concerns about my spiritual status dismissed by some who didn't know me and gave me cheap encouragement that had nothing to do with me.
2872. A priest who was out of touch with reality suggested that I marry someone who ended up taking all of my money.
2873. A priest called my "a big girl" and got agitated with my confession. I don't feel Jesus would talk to me the way the priests have.
2874. I've had too many experiences with priests who are in a hurry, not listening, talking about themselves, and "phoning it in."
2875. I was scolded and shamed.
2876. I was chastised as a little girl for wasting the priest's time with trivial sins. As an adult I was reprimanded for the sin I confessed. I acknowledged that is why I was confessing. He requested that I confess more sins and I refused. The aftermath of how that encounter was handled resulted in leaving that parish.
2877. I was told twice – several years in between, with two different priests – that I wasn't trying hard enough and was denied absolution..
2878. Growing up Catholic and making my first confession in second grade, I can say that my early experiences were somewhat difficult. I didn't understand the sacrament and felt pressured to go.
2879. As a teenager, I was questioning where I stood with regard to the Church's teachings on birth control and abortion. Instead of taking the opportunity to have a conversation and guide me calmly, the priest simply told me if I believed in abortion I could not be Catholic. I felt lost and thought about pulling away from the church. Thank goodness I had another conversation a different priest was able to give me guidance and help me understanding the teachings of our Lord.
2880. The opposite of understanding, just rote.

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2881. The difficulty comes from my own lack of confidence in the process. I never know or feel like I'm doing it right.
2882. As a member of a small parish with one priest, there are times I'm uncomfortable going to the same person for everything.
2883. About 3 years ago I went to a penance service with my four children at my parish. The church distributed cards to guide you through examination of conscience and the steps for confession. The card focused so much on sexual sins, asking many questions about homosexuality, like: Do you have thoughts about touching or kissing anyone of the same sex? Have you touched anyone of the same sex? It also asked if you have considered harming or killing yourself, but phrased in an accusatory and shaming way. My teen kids didn't want to go back to the parish or any churches in the diocese and my young adult son wouldn't go to Mass for almost a year. We finally started attending a church in a neighboring diocese. It was uncomfortable and bazaar.
2884. Just sometimes I'm embarrassed to state the sin, or disappointed with myself that it is the same sin over and over again, and hence questioning my own sincerity or understanding why it is a sin.
2885. As a teen, I was at a communal Reconciliation service during Holy Week, and we were waiting in line for different priests, when the pastor, who was in the booth with the screen, came out and told me he didn't have anyone in his line and I should come and confess to him. There was a reason he had the shortest line! He was aloof and unsympathetic.
2886. Priests who rush and clearly don't listen.
2887. One priest was impatient with me and another time a different Priest was rushing.
2888. I have sometimes felt shrugged off, or made to feel that we are just getting through it, instead of participating in a sacrament.
2889. I once went to confession in St Peter's in the Vatican. The priest told me off. I had never been asked to say a boilerplate phrase as an act of contrition, but he made me repeat one after him word by word.
2890. I have been yelled at, yes yelled at, by a priest, so that the entire church could hear. I was 15.
2891. It's difficult when I feel I'm being rushed or when I'm told something I confess isn't that big of a deal.
2892. A hard of hearing priest repeated everything I said loudly.
2893. A very old and cranky priest actually sounded mad about what I confessed.
2894. I said I found it hard to attend Mass consistently because my children misbehave and the priest made me feel even worse about it by reminding me that it's my duty to make sure we all attend church.
2895. Once, when discussing possible condom usage, the confessor did not have a good understanding of what a perimenopausal woman goes through with irregular cycles and uncertain fertility, I was told to just wait a few years to have sex. Unfortunately, that isn't a good plan to grow a marriage. It is difficult when the priest is "clueless" about a concept.
2896. Not feeling that I was heard
2897. When I was 12, I was told I was doing it wrong. Not a good way to keep a boy in the church but for some reason I am still here and won't be chased out!

2898. I prefer face-to-face, but when a priest closes the screen in my face before I've concluded my Act of Contrition, it feels like an insult.
2899. I was reprimanded for missing Mass and was told Christ would not be in my marriage! That was almost 30 years ago ... and he's in my marriage.
2900. When the priest could not hear, he started to speak louder and folks in line could hear most everything. I quit going to the priest and went to another priest face-to-face.
2901. The tone of the priest was one of reprimand. It's already challenging to go to confession but to hear this kind of tone makes the process burdensome.
2902. I had gone to a priest to talk to him about my fear that I might have cancer in my female organs. I asked him not to say anything to my husband about it until I knew the test results. Three days later, on Sunday, as my husband and I were leaving the church, the priest asked me about whether the tests had come back malignant or benign. I was shocked and felt betrayed. I have tried to go to confession since but I don't feel comfortable.
2903. I've had priests who assumed the worst of me or didn't take the time to listen but just wanted the number of sins and then to absolve and send me on my way.
2904. I've had priests who remained totally silent priests when I was obviously crying.
2905. My first Confession was in the sanctuary in front of my entire classes and their families. It wasn't audible, but I believe it's the source of my debilitating anxiety I feel surrounding the sacrament.
2906. Sometimes priests have their own agenda. One told me to give my husband the silent treatment. Another asked me if I practice birth control when my confession had nothing whatsoever to do with anything even remotely relevant to his question. He did not know anything about me. I had just had my second miscarriage and already had four living toddlers.
2907. I didn't complete the sacraments until I was an adult and have always felt I didn't know how to go to Confession like those who'd been doing this since they were children. A particularly unfortunate experience involved the priest seizing on one phrase, asking me a question that I answered before telling him I'd already confessed that sin, his saying I didn't have to repeat it, my replying I didn't intend to, etc.
2908. Most of my more recent experiences of confession have been difficult. I find myself irritated by the trite attempts at counseling. I know priests mean well, but it falls flat and seems shallow. Almost like they feel obliged to say something more than the sacrament requires but they don't have the training to say anything useful.
2909. A priest telling me about his similar experience. He kept me in the confessional 20 minutes and I felt like everyone was looking at me, wondering what I had done, when I exited.
2910. Unfortunately, one confession was with a priest who made me feel like I wasn't bringing forth all my deepest darkest sins and chastised me for not examining my conscience more completely. I found out later he had some problems.
2911. The priest fell asleep during my confession.
2912. I had an abortion a long time before I was Catholic and, without knowing anything of the circumstances, the priest was extremely judgmental and critical.
2913. I once remembered a way I had dishonored my mother. It was twelve years after she passed away. The priest belittled me because the transgression had been so long ago and I was bringing it up then. He left the active priesthood shortly after that episode.

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2914. The worst was a priest who berated me for not saying the Act of Contrition correctly. I did not go back for several years.
2915. One priest told me I wasn't the only who struggled and to stop asking for direction.
2916. I've had difficulty with priests not following the rite.
2917. A priest was judgmental and asking unnecessary questions.
2918. When the priest gives too much or unwanted advice.
2919. When I confess my anger, the priest apologizes, but I want forgiveness for my mistakes.
2920. Showing up for confession and having no one there, having a sign stating to call a certain number and hearing the annoyed priest say really? Right now?
2921. Being told that I shouldn't be nervous (thanks for downplaying my mental health issues)
2922. Being informed that my sin isn't really a sin and I'm wasting his time. Being told, "You're how old and you don't know what to do by now?"
2923. Being asked to hurry up because the priest had other things to do.
2924. When the priest dismissed my anxieties as not relevant.
2925. When I felt like it was a production line... Penance was a formula of prayers.
2926. A priest told me that I was going to be fat and suicidal. I had confessed pride and gluttony. That was obviously not helpful.
2927. I had a regular confessor who really should have realized that I was dealing with mental illness (depression) and needed counseling. I should have gotten help much sooner than I did, in part because I spiritualized everything. It's important for priests to have some basic knowledge of the signs of these things.
2928. One priest responded to my description of a difficult situation with "You must have felt..." jumping to conclusions. Well meaning as he was, trying to be comforting, he wasn't really listening.
2929. I was told I didn't speak very good Polish.
2930. Sometimes the experience has felt transactional.
2931. I had a radical traditionalist who pushed punishment.
2932. A priest last year told me I had to "work harder" to forgive someone if I wanted God to forgive me.
2933. I had a priest that sounded annoyed at best.
2934. I didn't say the Act of Contrition the same way the priest did. He wasn't happy.
2935. Yes, feeling like a number or cattle.
2936. One priest wanted to give having a child as a penance.
2937. Panicking that I'd forget a sin or the words to the prayers
2938. When priest seems to want a list of sins and has a let's just get this over attitude. I have had a priest tell me my feelings do not count, I am just a woman!
2939. When the priest said, "You did what?!"
2940. I had confessed about pornography use. The priest said that I was being immature and acting like a "hormonal masturbating teenager." I felt insulted. He lectured me for over 30 minutes! When I left the confessional, there was a long line of people staring at me. I bet they thought I had killed someone.
2941. The disinterest of the confessor in what I was revealing.
2942. The lack of priestly presence

2943. One priest appeared afraid of me. As I pulled my chair nearer to him, he pulled his chair back. He was very temperamental and clearly didn't want to be there.
2944. A priest got defensive at what I told him. I had confessed drinking too much. I think maybe he had a problem with drinking and didn't want to consider that it might be a sin.
2945. The other people who were waiting to confess were extremely rude to me, even to the point of cutting in line and accusing me of cutting when I'd been there at least an hour earlier than them. The priest was kind, but while I was more concerned about absolution after having abandoned God in my youth – I was crying over it – he was more worried about whether or not I had ever used birth control.
2946. The priest fell asleep. During my First Reconciliation.
2947. No, just rote answers and no sense of God from the confessor.
2948. I've been very blessed with good confessors always.
2949. I go at least once a year if not more often but have had priests tell me I need to be going more often in a judgmental way. Once I had a priest tell me I didn't sound "sorry enough." Both instances make me never want to go back. I find confession one of the hardest and most challenging things I do in life. If I wasn't feeling sorry for what I did, I wouldn't have gone in the first place. I already feel pretty bad about myself when I'm in confession. I really shouldn't be made to feel even worse than I already do there.
2950. Once a priest denied me absolution because he thought I was insufficiently contrite. I did not go back to reconciliation for many years.
2951. After my first confession, at age 55, two of my RCIA teachers were so excited for me to relay to them how fun it was. What? And why do they want to know my spiritually intimate moments anyway?
2952. It's been embarrassing.
2953. My difficulties come as I examine myself in preparation, or if I avoid the Sacrament, because I think that I am not worthy, for some reason. Once I seek out the Sacrament, it's been so cleansing.
2954. Confessing certain sins and having the courage to bring them out in the open.
2955. Having to confess my sins is always difficult, but it makes me aware of what I need to work on to grow to love God more.
2956. The priest seemed more interested my sense of repentance than anything else. No one needs homilies during Confession.
2957. Being the mother of a transgender daughter has been hard.
2958. It's difficult to hear some priests judging.
2959. I've been in confession face-to-face with priests who seemed bored and in a hurry to finish.
2960. When a priest looked distracted or bored. I think priests are generally responsive in the confessional.
2961. One time a priest said, "How dare you offend the ears of a priest!" I had confessed masturbation.
2962. I would have to say embarrassment.
2963. I have avoided going to my priest because of his constant emphasis on sin and his black and white outlook on life.
2964. Lack of warmth and interest causes me to be reticent.

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2965. When the priest simply repeats ad nauseam the Catechism – “The teaching of the church is.....” – without offering any practical help.
2966. The priest couldn't handle that I hadn't been to confession in two years. He knew me personally.
2967. When the priest asked if I had anything else to confess, I said no. He proceeded to say that I had to confess to being a liar because all women lie.
2968. One priest told me it was a good thing I didn't get hit by a bus on the way in or I would have gone to hell. Another was fishing for sins he was sure I committed but didn't confess to. “Is that it? Are you sure? Well have you done xyz?”
2969. Sometimes I'm in a setting where I feel like other parishioners can hear me or know how long I'm in there for.
2970. Confessing to the pastor that I did not like him or his policies.
2971. I really haven't.
2972. When the priest didn't talk to me about anything and just said I was good to go after a quick prayer or absolution. No engagement, no compassion, just a tick box.
2973. A priest who only wanted the number of sins and told me that confession isn't the place for conversation. I got the sense he just wanted to get through it.
2974. When priests do not use the prescribed form of absolution. It leaves doubt in the mind if the confession was valid.
2975. Difficulties arose in two circumstances. Once a confessor suggested that what I confessed was not a sin and that I was too hard on myself (not true). The other was when a confessor inserted his own struggles with addiction and recovery into my confession.
2976. I've often struggled to articulate my sins in Confession, and I usually feel like I get a brief platitude instead of actual understanding about my issues.
2977. The priest insisted that maybe my guilt was 100 percent due to something he thought I wasn't telling him
2978. On one occasion as I confessed, the priest seemed surprised and asked me again to repeat what I had said. I received absolution but left confession feeling very ashamed.
2979. I've had a couple of experiences in which the priest shamed me about what I brought to the sacrament. That was not helpful and made me hesitate to either confess those sins again or to go to that priest. I have also had a priest ask for what I thought was too much detail. He thought I was trying to avoid my sin. I thought he didn't really need to know all of that. I felt like I didn't have the option to not answer, even though I was uncomfortable.
2980. As a child, I disliked having to talk to the priest with a wall in between us. I was so happy when things changed and I could talk to the priest face-to-face. The wall made me feel a separation from the priest and it felt unnatural.
2981. In high school, the flimsy curtain in Confessional made privacy a challenge.
2982. The worst experience was with a confessor who had absolutely no understanding of what working parents, especially working mothers, actually have to do day-to-day. He was dismissive and I left just feeling worse and not respected.
2983. One priest was mad I came two weeks in a row. It wasn't something I normally did. I just messed up and wanted to go back to confession.

2984. A grumpy priest said I wasn't sorry, refused me absolution and slammed the "slide" in my face! I was terrified! I called another priest who came and absolved me. I was too frightened to leave the Cathedral!
2985. The priest broke my confidence
2986. A priest prying in a way that wasn't sensitive.
2987. I once stood in line for an hour, before Easter. I used that time to say the Rosary and examine my conscience. After I'd confessed, the priest gave me a hard time, and said next time I need to think more thoroughly about my sins. They weren't really terrible, to this day I don't know if he thought they were bad, or if he thought they were too trivial and I was holding back something worse. I wasn't. I didn't go to confession for a long, long time after that.
2988. The priest's unworldliness and shaming.
2989. Going to confession as a fourth grader to a priest who turned out to be a pedophile.
2990. I try to focus on just a few things so I'm not overwhelmed and have a plan to change. I focus on relationships. Priests are sometimes critical of this.
2991. Once I was very nervous and could not remember the act of contrition. The priest laughed at me and scolded me. It was horrible.
2992. A priest told me: "It is a confession. Just say 1, 2, 3. Quick!"
2993. When priests make assumptions about me with a tone of anger.
2994. A priest who said maybe my daughter won't turn out gay even though she is an adult and out of the closet.
2995. Yes, going again and again to confess the same sin.
2996. The priest seemed annoyed or judgmental.
2997. Priests who make you feel bad about yourself or just rattle off a generic penance.
2998. Once during Confession, while I was saying my sins, the priest's cell phone rang, and he picked it up and started having a conversation with someone. It was pretty discouraging. It made me feel like the whole exercise was useless and that the priest must have thought it was unimportant.
2999. I find it off-putting when priests try to be psychologists.
3000. It's hard not knowing how much detail is necessary.
3001. In a couple of churches where I have gone to confession, the priests don't seem to realize that sound leaks from the confessional. None of us in line want to hear it and we make noise, we clear our throats, we jingle our car keys. Please make sure the confessionals do not leak too much sound or play music or something.
3002. Once when confessing a clear mortal sin, the priest told me it wasn't really a mortal sin. It was definitely a mortal sin.
3003. I have never felt the peace you're supposed to have afterwards.
3004. Reciting the Act of Contrition. As an adult, I feel like an elementary school child when asked to recite the prayer. It might work for kids, but not adults. If I weren't contrite, why would I even be there?
3005. Only when I've waited a long time (two months or more) before returning. I just feel uncomfortable then.
3006. I was so embarrassed to reveal all my flaws and sins to priests who knew me well personally.
3007. The priest had a moody character
3008. I don't like face-to-face at all.

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3009. I do not care for perfunctory experiences, nor did I care for judgmental and rude priests. When this happened, I never went back to the priests in question.
3010. Getting yelled at as a child and teen.
3011. I always think back to my earlier experiences of confession, which felt incredibly fear-based. It felt more like a test than a sacrament.
3012. I am deaf, so must do face-to-face confessions. In one, the priest was working his Rosary beads and saying his rosary at the exact same time I was confessing. I was never completely sure he was really paying attention to me. I was tempted to go to another priest afterwards to confess to having made a bad confession!
3013. I have been lucky to have had all good experiences.
3014. Mostly my own doing, but when there's only 15 minutes scheduled for confession per week and Mass starts in a few minutes, I feel like we're just going through the motions.
3015. A robot priest who was there but seem to have cared less about me who simply said, "Three Hail Marys and one Our Father."
3016. My own guilt and concern of being judged harshly.
3017. When I'm worried that I will do or say something wrong. I've sometimes worried that I won't be considered "Catholic enough" because of particular doubts.
3018. When young priests spouted doctrine they didn't understand.
3019. It is difficult to admit some things. My own pride is usually the culprit for me!
3020. When I have felt rushed and not listened to.
3021. When priests have told me that something the Church teaches is a sin is not a sin.
3022. When priests have not absolved me with the proper formula.
3023. When a priest downplays a mortal sin and grave matter or says or suggests that it's not a mortal sin.
3024. I was told I should be ashamed for not having memorized the act of contrition.
3025. I was told I was a bad mother.
3026. I had a bit of a list: "I swear. I don't pray enough. I am impatient, etc." I felt I was dismissed. I went in trying to improve and felt let down.
3027. The Priest asked me if I went to communion after repeated habitual sin before going to confession. I said yes. He then said very sternly: "You cannot do that and I don't care who told you otherwise." Being obsessive-compulsive by nature, all that did was feed my OCD.
3028. Priests who told me I needed to pray more for my marriage to succeed. They didn't seem interested in the type of marriage I had, just that it could be "fixed" with prayer.
3029. A priest lit into me about a sin, which in his mind was serious, and that I shouldn't have received communion. In my opinion, the sin was not serious.
3030. When the priest has been indifferent or judgmental.
3031. I was judged pretty harshly by one confessor. Perhaps he was trying to "scare me straight," which is how I took it. I've committed that sin again I'm afraid.
3032. I've had a priest shout out in shock.
3033. I felt like I was being held hostage while a young priest played amateur psychologist before he would offer absolution. I almost walked out.
3034. Not difficult but not especially welcoming.
3035. After I confess, the priest passes it off as nothing and gives the standard, "One Our Father and three Hail Marys."

3036. A priest nearly withheld the sacrament from me because he didn't think I was repentant enough.
3037. I never know what to say. I don't know what constitutes as a sin. The things that are often considered sins, like homosexuality, I refuse to ask forgiveness for that.
3038. Ornery attitudes tend to block the Holy Spirit from participating in the Sacrament, when the whole point of the Sacrament is to welcome the Holy Spirit!
3039. I had a priest who said I was not sorry. Why would I even be here if I wasn't sorry? He was rude and presumed to know my heart more than I did. I have a Master of Divinity degree and serve in full-time ministry. I almost gave him a piece of my mind but I was so caught off guard, I just was stunned. I should have walked out and told him he better not do that to any other penitent who came in.
3040. I have had priests basically have a whole long conversation about what I confessed, and it's just awkward.
3041. Priests not listening, or making me feel rushed or judged.
3042. When I was a child and "got" the wrong priest who asked more questions.
3043. On at least five occasions, the priest did not use even the minimum form of absolution. I had to repeat these very difficult confessions, something that should never ever happen to a penitent.
3044. On more than one occasion I felt rushed through the process by different priests at different parishes. There is a need for a standardized, loving and empathic approach.
3045. When a priest seems haughty and irritated to hear confessions.
3046. A priest who regarded sexual sin as worse than the others.
3047. Feeling the priest was not present, when he gave only rote absolution and penance.
3048. I've been blessed with kind-hearted confessors.
3049. When the priest wanted to discuss election results.
3050. I've had a few transactional confessions. They hurt. I don't need Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory bes. I need guidance and mercy.
3051. A priest at my former parish "grilled" you on the sins you've committed, which I understand from other priests is not how it's supposed to be done. I avoided going to him for confession.
3052. The most difficult part is obviously being honest about my sins, but if the priest is cold, or asks too many questions, it is uncomfortable.
3053. A caring loving forgiving priest is awesome. I have had no negative experiences.
3054. Being forced to go in religious education. Kids don't like to be surprised and have to examine their consciences on the fly.
3055. When the priest doesn't even listen to me, when there is no dialogue, and when I'm laughed at.
3056. Finding the words for embarrassing sins.
3057. When I've been met with a condescending air of superiority from the priest, despite the fact that we all are sinners.
3058. When a priest told me that I could die and go straight to hell. That was the last time I voluntarily went to confession. 30 years ago.
3059. The only difficulties I have are with priests who obviously don't want to be in the confessional or face-to-face and just want to get out of there.
3060. When a priest has been indifferent to my life experiences.
3061. A priest who just says the words but is not engaged in the conversation.

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3062. Being told I was too scrupulous.
3063. Just getting to confession is hard because the times are so few.
3064. When I have had difficulty understanding the language of the Confessor.
3065. It can be hard to confess a mortal sin even though I know there is the seal of Confession
3066. When the confessor made me feel worse and experience more shame than I was already feeling. It took me a few years to return. Such was the shame and unworthiness I felt.
3067. When I am not as prepared as I should be.
3068. Having to say what I've done is hard.
3069. Receiving nothing in the way of counsel and essentially being handed a penance and sent on my way.
3070. I was told once that what I knew to be a sin wasn't really a sin. The priest dismissed it as nothing. Another time I was told that I just needed to try harder. He was probably right but it seemed curt.
3071. Sometimes the confessor hasn't understood my problem and I decided further explanation wasn't worth the trouble.
3072. When I've received only rote robotic responses from the priest.
3073. When a priest has insisted upon a particular format, which is troublesome for me due to past traumas with clergy.
3074. When priests have behaved as if they're just an absolution machine.
3075. When a priest was scrolling through sports scores on his phone as I confessed. I think he thought the screen blocked my view of what he was doing.
3076. I've only been scolded by a priest in confession once, but it was kind of justified.
3077. Not being listened to is difficult for me. I don't like being psychoanalyzed, but I do appreciate some kind of individual response.
3078. When in Rome, a confessor said that I should never take the Eucharist unless I've been to confession first. He really chewed me out.
3079. I wouldn't say it was difficult, but disappointing. First, the priest barely looked at me when I walked in, and then the whole process felt very rushed. After my confession, the priest quickly gave me a penance of saying a certain number of a certain prayer. It didn't feel like he really listened to what I was sharing and just wanted to move the line along.
3080. Difficult, no. Lackluster, yes, when the priest seemed to be going through the motions.
3081. It's always difficult when it has been a while since I have spoken with a priest.
3082. Not difficult but not necessarily transformative through my lack of thorough preparation
3083. I was once denied being able to go face-to-face after years of doing it. It was an older priest. I was devastated.
3084. When I described trouble in relationship with a family member, the confessor asked whether I had yet reconciled with that person. This was before I was ready, so I struggled with the question and found it challenging.
3085. In my younger years, I had different ideas about what a relationship with a confessor might look like from reading lives of the saints. I found myself disappointed when the priest I'd meet with wasn't a fit for that deeper relationship.
3086. I think the most difficult experience was when the priest became confrontational.

3087. I would say that one thing that makes confession difficult is when there are others nearby who might be able to overhear.
3088. My first Confession was horrific. The priest got angry at me because I didn't have enough sins to confess and I didn't know the right prayers to say. I still hate to go and don't know what I am supposed to say. This is after nearly 50 years as a Catholic.
3089. Who hasn't had a difficult experience? Everything from guilt tripping priests, to priests who mumbled through like a robot who wasn't really listening, to priests who actually talked more than I did and I didn't get a chance to confess all my sins, because I wanted to get out of there and let the people in line behind me have a chance to go before Mass.
3090. I think priests can become complacent and judgmental at times. There is nothing worse than leaving confession feeling bad about yourself. You don't feel cleansed or right with God.
3091. When the priest was reading the bulletin while I was confessing. His advice was then not even relevant. He was rude and made me feel like I was wasting his time.
3092. At priest told me I was proud because I wear a veil, which I didn't even confess because I don't think I'm better or holier because I veil.
3093. A priest didn't believe that I could have that many sins in one week.
3094. In some cases the priest would talk on and on and not really understand my issue.
3095. Sometimes I can barely hear the priest.
3096. Occasionally I have ended up with a priest who is too much in a hurry and acts annoyed.
3097. A priest not using the correct form for absolution, so I left not knowing if I had been absolved or not.
3098. A priest said, "Oh, you don't need to worry about that" and made light of the sins I confessed because they were "little" ones. When you're trying to live a life of virtue even the little ones matter.
3099. Some priests have been abrupt in getting me to speak when I have been trying to get words out.
3100. I had a priest yell at me when I was 12 because I hadn't been to confession in a year. I had gone at Easter then I was sick at Christmas and I didn't drive and didn't go to Catholic school so I didn't get there until the following Easter.
3101. The poorly formed confessor who did not like my personally worded act of contrition and hissed, "Don't you know the act of contrition?" I should of replied, "Father, read the Rite. I can use my own words!"
3102. When I was a child I went to confession and the priest yelled at me and said what I had confessed was not a sin. I can't so confused and embarrassed.
3103. When at a young age I confessed impure thoughts, at my father's suggestion, I was bewildered by the priest's impatience to dismiss them as nothing.
3104. I was made to feel shame and guilt. The Priest acted personally offended that I had missed Mass and received the Eucharist prior to confessing. That confession experience has stayed with me for years.
3105. The priest was not understanding and not compassionate.
3106. Having a priest get impatient with me when I told him my confusion. I was told to just get over it!
3107. When the priest is judgmental and clearly has a personal axe to grind.

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3108. Being scolded.
3109. Not in confession, per se, but the feeling like I was burdening others, either because I was towards the end of the line or because the priest was visibly tired of hearing confessions.
3110. When I've encountered clericalism and legalism.
3111. When I have felt that I was a random face and assigned random prayers for penance.
3112. I was having a hard time making a confession due to getting overly emotional and the priest told me to come back.
3113. I had one priest tell me that he wasn't on board with secular orders. I'm a secular Carmelite. It wasn't a bad experience, just odd. I felt judged.
3114. Sometimes the priest is barely audible. Straining to hear only adds to the stress of the experience.
3115. Priests using stereotypes.
3116. A priest who rushed to get me out of the confessional.
3117. Yes, once a priest refused to absolve me because he said what I was describing was not sin, but rather marital problems. I felt I had sinned and it was painful not to receive absolution.
3118. A priest who spent more time focused on how often I go rather than what I was telling him.
3119. When the priest has been aloof, judgmental, rude or arrogant.
3120. Once I went and the priest was drunk.
3121. I grew up in a small parish. The priest knew me by the sound of my voice and always asked me what I had done wrong before I had finished even the "Bless me father for I have sinned" opener.
3122. I still have bad feelings about confession after being forced by my Catholic grade school to go. It was never horrible but the old booths were scary and I don't think I was well-catechized about going face-to-face.
3123. My only difficult experience was being embarrassed to confess all my true sins.
3124. It was difficult when I would keep receiving advice that wasn't that very helpful. It felt like I wasn't being understood on how much help I needed.
3125. When a penitent before me took too long and the priest had to leave and didn't hear my Confession when I was next in line. It was too far to come back and I wasn't able to go to Communion that Mass because of it.
3126. I once told a priest in confession I was struggling in my marriage. He suggested we stop using NFP for a while. We have never used any other method to space our children. I never went back to that priest again!
3127. It's difficult to have the courage to go in the box with the screen.
3128. I don't like confessions where it seems rote, where I am expected just to give a list and absolution is granted. I feel it is more checking off boxes rather than true reflection.
3129. Not having the ability to use a screen.
3130. As a kid, the priest gave everyone the same penance. What's the point if I already know to say three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys? That's at least what I thought as a kid.
3131. I have always been confused as to how to confess. A laundry list? A story? Sins told in detail? Just enough to state the sin?

3132. When priests are busy and they run through a rote response quickly. It doesn't feel the same.
3133. When the priest feels rushed and just rushes you through everything.
3134. I have had priests who I feel like didn't listen and who stopped me before I was finished, like they were in a hurry or because something else was more important.
3135. I've had a priest ask intimate questions about my sex life that made me feel very uncomfortable.
3136. Only those times when I forget a sin I intended to confess or became distracted.
3137. Absolutely! Face-to-face is hard! Any time you confess mortal sins, you have egg and frosting all over your face. Not a very rational idea!
3138. Yes, asking for detail about certain sins that felt inquisitive versus trying to find roots to be helpful.
3139. I find it difficult to be face-to-face with the priest. If I am discussing some family matter, I feel I would be influencing him outside of the confessional about a family member that he has contact with.
3140. There have been times I knew that I had mortally sinned and the priest said it wasn't as big a deal as I knew it really was. It was confusing because I knew it truly was a mortal sin and it made me question whether I could trust the priests at this particular parish to help guide me to holiness.
3141. Once the priest made me feel very, very guilty for a sin that was complicated by an eating disorder I was dealing with.
3142. When the priest is frustrated. Or just gives me "number and sin." I hate that.
3143. When I have had an uncaring confessor.
3144. Occasionally, when the priest doesn't respond or comment. I wonder if he is really listening
3145. At my old parish, the priest was stuck in his old ways, did not leave room for interpretation, and didn't give absolution.
3146. When the priest has talked too much or said my sins were nothing to worry about. If I brought it up it is because I know I've sinned. I don't want to be talked out of it.
3147. Finding good trustworthy, holy and inspirational confessors who are available.
3148. The confessor was hard to understand.
3149. Being interrupted, being told it's not serious when it was to me.
3150. I once was yelled at by a priest. He said I had the same sins as everyone else. Well, I hope I am not the one who comes up with unique immorality!!
3151. The difficulty was being embarrassed about confessing a type of sin.
3152. When priests are very quick and pro forma.
3153. No per se, but it seems that some of the priests have "standard" penances like three Hail Marys or three Our Fathers. A penance that is appropriate for the occasion and one that allows the person to reflect and offer thanksgiving would be truly helpful.
3154. I had one time when a priest was hurrying me through. It had been awhile since my last confession and he didn't seem interested in hearing what I had to confess.
3155. Some priests have seemed to question my contrition or preparedness not to sin again. Normally it leaves me scrambling to say anything to just get out of the confessional.
3156. When it seems that the father is in rush or is not listening to me.
3157. Sometimes the priest has been dismissive of my sins.
3158. When the priest doesn't want to be there, it makes you feel more alone.

*Merciful Like the Father*

3159. More than once, the priest was in a hurry to end the confession.
3160. A priest who is rote in his approach. By-the-book lacks human warmth.
3161. Since the pandemic began, it is harder to find confession details from parishes. Not only times but places.
3162. When I've had the feeling of not being heard, rushed, or walked through the steps properly.
3163. Before Easter I made what I felt was a good Confession, all venial, no mortal sins but the priest as a penance gave me, "Say three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys every morning for my intentions until your next Confession." My next confession will normally be at Christmas. This penance might not be a problem for most, but my mornings tend toward the chaotic, especially if I've slept through my alarm (frequently) or it takes awhile to wake up. I prefer a penance I can say in church. I'm not complaining, but it has been extremely difficult for me and I have missed on occasion.
3164. I am a man and have thoughts and sins of the flesh and sometimes the priest is not compassionate and seems judgmental.
3165. Whenever a Priest gives vague or strange penances, my experience has been difficult. For example, "Do three nice things for someone," or when a priest tells me a prayer I've never heard before and asks me to pray it as a penance.
3166. I had a priest one time tell me that I wasn't taking my sins seriously and equated them to much more serious sins. I was so distraught from the experience that it took three years to regain the courage to go to confession again.
3167. I was asking the confessor for help and advise. Instead I was yelled at and treated poorly.
3168. I'm ashamed to tell the priest my most grievous sins.
3169. One time a priest verbally abused me and he walked out of the confessional.
3170. There was one time my confessor told me "You're doing it wrong, start over" but didn't really say why. Guidance in the sacrament may be needed sometimes.
3171. It has been very difficult when it's hard to understand the priest, usually because of a heavy accent.
3172. I haven't had a difficult experience since my teens and that was a very long time ago. The priest yelled, "You did what?" I'm not joking. I didn't want to come out of the confessional afterward (people would see me) and was angry with my mother for making me go to that priest.
3173. When a priest can't explain canon law or break from the standard script.
3174. A priest laughed and said missing church on purpose wasn't a sin. He ridiculed me because, he said, "Americans think they're supposed to improve."
3175. If a priest seems indifferent to hearing my confession, I can sense it.
3176. I'm embarrassed over confessing certain sins.
3177. The most difficult experiences have generally been when something is said that exacerbates the shame. The shame is already intense before going. However, I try to remember that the purpose of the advice that is offered is to buoy me up, not tear me down.
3178. I am not a fan of the old school confessional experience. I can no longer kneel and just don't like being in the dark box.

3179. There was a priest who made me feel very bad about myself and my weaknesses and offered no help.
3180. Usually the difficulty is finding convenient times for Confession.
3181. Not receiving the actual words of absolution. I've been to several parishes where the priest said something like "You are forgiven," or "the Lord forgives you." I asked very politely and respectfully for regular absolution and he said that was regular absolution. It really unnerved and disappointed me. I want to hear "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."
3182. When I had a baby and a two-year-old, I tried taking them into confession with me because my two-year-old tended to run off. I tried to fit the double stroller where the kids could be buckled, but it was too big. The priest told me not to bring the kids with me and to leave them with someone. My husband was working, I didn't know anyone there, but thankfully he let me whisper my sins in his ear. So the next time, I stood up in order to be able to watch my kids through the tiny confession door window, and the priest asked why I wasn't kneeling.
3183. Having the courage to confess certain things
3184. The main difficulty is being honest with myself and our Lord.
3185. For me as a convert, being put on the spot to say the act of contrition, which I do not have memorized. The priest passed me his cell phone so I could read it from his phone. I felt kind of humiliated.
3186. I've personally had bad experiences in the Papal Basilicas in Rome. Harshness. Anger. Shaming. Not helpful. I've had parishioners too leave Confession at Papal Basilicas in tears and traumatized by bitter priests. One priest at St. Peters asked so many questions about my age, nationality, vocation, what I was doing in Rome, my University, program, etc. that he could have figured out precisely who I was.
3187. One time I was asked to use my "inside voice." It was embarrassing.
3188. One time a priest told me something I know is a mortal sin was not.
3189. My priest violated the seal and gossiped about something I had told him about campus ministry.
3190. I've tried to confess the sin of lust and the priest was clearly uncomfortable. How can I confess this if the priest doesn't want to hear it?
3191. Only my reluctance to confess.
3192. A priest once yelled at me. He misunderstood what I was trying to say.
3193. When I struggle, it's my own fault for not taking enough time to prepare.
3194. The priest who heard my second confession insisted I tell him how many times I did one thing or another. He wasn't kind about it. I remember making up numbers, cutting the confession short, and running home terrified and in tears.
3195. The confessor didn't give me a penance and when I asked, I was told just to meditate on why I had come to confession.
3196. Every face-to-face confession. I like the anonymity of the Confessional.
3197. I sometimes have felt uncomfortable with the priest, especially when he rushes me.
3198. Probably when I feel rushed, because the Confessor in a hurry.
3199. As a teenager, I had a very stressful relationship with my parents who placed responsibilities on me that were not age-appropriate. I confessed to not meeting these expectations such as "not spending enough time with my family since I have a lot of homework to do," which was the truth. The confessor did not seem to know how to

help me, suggesting that my parents were being unreasonable but doing so in a way that made me feel guilty for not sticking up for myself. I wish he had suggested some concrete steps to help me, like speaking to a school counselor, because at the time I could only see myself as a failure due to my fear of confronting my parents.

3200. I am in the medical field and am careful to avoid cooperation with evil, even remotely. I confessed a situation where, in a chaotic moment, I very remotely cooperated with a situation in which someone else prescribed birth control. The priest did not know me well and seemed suspicious that I was not confessing everything, and though he did give me absolution, he added the phrase removing "any interdict or excommunication" which really threw me off and made me feel terribly ashamed. It was like, as careful as I am to follow God's will, I may have accidentally excommunicated myself. I ended up discussing it with another priest who agreed that the action was not a mortal sin and suggested that the original priest was just being extra careful and probably didn't deal with these situations every day. That made me feel better but I still almost cry when I think about it.
3201. Occasionally a priest has seemed to be on automatic pilot.
3202. Once a priest grimaced, which made me feel bad. But then I realized that I still received absolution.
3203. The priest told everyone in line to keep it brief because he didn't have all day. He told us to confess only grave or mortal sins. I left that Parish.
3204. When the priest was prejudiced.
3205. Internally admitting to myself and God that I need forgiveness
3206. In elementary school, everyone was afraid to go to Confession because the pastor would yell at you and you knew everyone outside the confessional could hear.
3207. I have had two difficult experiences. The first was when the priest laughed so loud, everyone outside the confessional heard him and gave me quite the look when I exited. I didn't think it was funny at all. The other where the priest gave a long explanation as to why what I had confessed was a sin, long enough I got distracted and stopped listening. I knew it was a sin, that's why I confessed it, and his words really didn't help. I felt like Satan won that round, and I felt bad for wasting the priest's time.
3208. Most of the time the difficulty is in getting to Reconciliation in the first place.
3209. A confessor once gave me a penance of going on a retreat, which was not offered in my parish for another four months. I felt like that confession was hanging over me that whole time. The punishment was not proportionate to the crime.
3210. A confessor told me I didn't need to be there, that what I was confessing wasn't that bad. Maybe so, but it meant something to me to go, so he should have counseled me then, not kicked me out and denied absolution because there was a line.
3211. I have one bad experience with priest with whom I had disagreed in parish situation outside the confessional.
3212. I have had a few experiences of priests' being dismissive, as if my sins were not important.
3213. When the priest has rushed to judgment and given the impression of just going through the motions to get me out of the confessional.
3214. The difficulty has been truly feeling forgiven.

3215. The difficult confessions for me have been when the priest remains silent or makes no comments.
3216. I have been to confession when the priest has not followed the rubrics and give absolution in the correct form, which makes me feel uncomfortable.
3217. I have had a few: priests who give the same blah-blah-blah pep talks, who don't accept my transgressions as sin, or who it seems can't wait until I leave.
3218. My family was not the best at Act of Contrition. The priest told my daughter who worked in the rectory at the time to have our family work on that.
3219. When I've been guilt tripped.
3220. I have once or twice been told that a sin I confessed isn't so bad. I understand that there are more and less serious sins, so I don't dispute that part of it. I also understand that scrupulosity is a danger for which the priest must be on the look-out. But, unless the priest is concerned about someone being too scrupulous (and no such concern was mentioned in my confession), why diminish the sin or call its inherent ugliness into question? That in tandem with some frankly hippie terminology and a general, "Jesus, Jesus, come and squeeze us" vibe made for a difficult experience for me, personally.
3221. As a child, our assistant pastor would yell at us. It made it hard to go back.
3222. When I have had difficulty hearing or understanding the priest (even before masking).
3223. I have had difficulty with group reconciliations. I feel everyone can hear me.
3224. I've had some embarrassing or weird confessions. Any time it goes wrong I try to remember the priest is human, try to examine whether I'm upset because I feel guilty or because he said something I didn't want to hear. I generally go to a different priest next time.
3225. I've struggled with deeply embarrassing and humiliating sins for years, and I'll never not be embarrassed to confess them or fear the disappointment of the confessors. Most confessors have been incredibly gracious; some, perhaps out of zeal or frustration, are less patient.
3226. I enter feeling unworthy already. When a priest makes you feel uncomfortable it makes it worse.
3227. A priest at our parish would never ask the penitent to say the Act of Contrition or use the correct formula for absolution. I walked out of confession and texted another priest what he said instead of the formula, to find out if I had been absolved. The other priest said it was the absolute minimum to be absolved.
3228. Yes, the sins I have had to confess face-to-face with a priest.
3229. When I have been lectured at or felt that I was given a "canned" response. When I've felt belittled or that I am a terrible person for what I've confessed.
3230. The confessor was impatient.
3231. It's difficult when the Priest has seemed uninterested in speaking with me, when he's conveyed an attitude of let's get this done.
3232. The only difficulty I've had with confession is accepting my own sins and being willing to confess them verbally to a priest. My sins, like many others, are very embarrassing.
3233. Sometimes it is hard to admit all my faults, or to feel I say the same thing over and over again, or that when I say my sins out loud, I sound so superficial. It makes me feel worse.

*Merciful Like the Father*

3234. I had an awkward experience. I walked into the confession and a priest was looking at his cell phone. He appeared to be embarrassed because I caught him off guard. It was very awkward.
3235. Every time I go, it's awkward. When the priest asks me to say the Act of Contrition and I ask for help, I get the eye like, "How dare you forget these!"
3236. Once I was reprimanded because I couldn't remember the Act of Contrition. Another time I was chastized because I hadn't gone to confession in a while.
3237. Not really difficult, just less fulfilling when the priest seems to be just going through the same routine.
3238. It's difficult when I'm nervous to tell the priest my mortal sin.
3239. The only one that was very difficult for me was when I went to confession after a tragic death of several loved ones. I had a hard time confessing my sins because the sins of another person who caused harm. The priest was incredibly understanding. He knew my heart and head was full of that recent incident. We prayed through this hardship together and it made it meaningful.
3240. Only when the priest appears like he is judging me.
3241. Only difficulty was when I did not get along with the priest.
3242. Accidentally overhearing a priest yell at someone who had just confessed a sin I was about to confess. Needless to say, I skipped naming that one, and it was a very long time before I could get myself to go back to confession.
3243. With progressive priests who don't see sin or robotic priests who don't seem to care.
3244. When I have encountered harshness or misunderstanding on the part of the priest. It's hard to correct misunderstandings in the confessional.
3245. When priests do not use the right words in forgiving me.
3246. Having to admit some difficult sins to a priest I knew well.
3247. I think it is hideously selfish when there is a long line and the same people every week take forever in the confessional. They should make an appointment with the priest if they need to talk for a long time.
3248. I had a priest once, upon hearing about my husband's erectile dysfunction issues, offer that he could meet with me privately in the rectory sometime that week and give me some pills from his country (which was in Africa) for him. That made me so uncomfortable. I avoid this priest now.
3249. When a priest does not address any of my sins when he gives counsel.
3250. I have always found "going to confession" difficult!
3251. When priests don't listen to what you are confessing. It's kind of like just getting your ticket punched.
3252. When the priest tries to get too personal. I feel like they pry rather than just hear my sins.
3253. Well I don't like confession services that are offered during Christmas and Easter. I would rather go in person.
3254. Being yelled at so loud by priest that others outside can hear. That experience has kept me from returning as frequently as I should.
3255. My parish priest finds it difficult to hear confessions so they are not offered in my parish. You must travel if you want to go to confession.

3256. When the penance given was not specific enough to know whether I had completed it. I also tend to confess even minute things, and have felt embarrassed confessing minor faults.
3257. Years ago a priest yelled at me for coming to confession after years of not going.
3258. A priest acted disgusted because I didn't know the words of a prayer.
3259. When I was cut off when trying to describe a situation.
3260. A priest told me, "My sin was unusual for a woman." That made me uncomfortable.
3261. My biggest difficulties have been within my own heart and mind. There have been small annoyances like others possibly hearing when they walk by, because Father wanted to hear my Confession just sitting in the the sanctuary.
3262. Priests who have been rude and judgmental.
3263. When the priest seems aloof, and just going through the motions.
3264. A confessor tried to talk me out of my sin. I never went back to him.
3265. The most difficult times were when I was young and I didn't know how to confess things I struggled with. Often, priests would say "I get it," move on quickly, and absolve me, as a way of being gentle with me. But I didn't "get it" and went through the same struggle over-and-over with confessor after confessor until I learned vocabulary to express what I was struggling with. Their effort at kindness often led to more discomfort for me.
3266. Feeling like the priest was rushed or having a bad day and just wanted to rush me out of the confessional. My penance felt like an assembly line response.
3267. Not really. Some priests are just better confessors than others.
3268. As a child I felt frightened. I think it was how I was educated about confession in my Catholic school. My adult experience has been positive.
3269. Having a priest literally yell at me over a venial sin. The whole Church could hear. I felt if he were capable, he would have sentenced me to hell then and there. I didn't dare complete my confession. It didn't scare me away from confession altogether, but I always made sure he wasn't hearing Confessions.
3270. When the Priest rushes me or dismisses my sins.
3271. One Priest told me in 1985 that pornography was okay.
3272. I was made to feel irredeemable for repeating same sin. I left feeling unhealed, bruised and beaten down.
3273. Just a priest who was acting like my sins weren't sins.
3274. I went back to confession after many years. I did not go face-to-face. I could hear the priest sighing every time I said something. I felt humiliated. Luckily, with the encouragement of a good friend, I did not let that experience keep me from going again. But I went to a different church!
3275. I had a priest tell me one time to come back when I have done a better examination of conscience. It scarred me and made me not want to go back.
3276. Once I felt judged by the priest, but I may have been too cavalier.
3277. I must say as a senior citizen now and a user of the sacrament earlier in my life on a regular basis that there would be occasions with priests back in the 60s and 70s where you would get someone who was just phoning it in; in other cases when the priest was just rude or unsympathetic to the situation being discussed, never offering assurances or possible solutions.

3278. The most difficult part is finding available Confession. My large parish has 30 minutes a week, so I gave up on that years ago. One time, when it was a night all churches in the Archdiocese were to offer Confession, the pastor actually looked at his watch while I was making my Confession. He offered less than an hour instead of the 3-4 hours the Archdiocese had requested.
3279. I felt that the priest did not truly listen to me and did not understand what I felt about my sins. I felt his mind was elsewhere and he looked at his watch a few times. I didn't feel that God really was there to hear me. I did the penance but the penance had no thought put into it.
3280. I had a priest scream at me, "You come here every week. When you tell me the same sins, you're wasting my time."
3281. Confessors saying, "That's not a sin" for a sin of the flesh; or "Only confess mortal sins" as if I couldn't use the sanctifying grace for my venial sins as well.
3282. I know a priest who would bring up things confessed later, not in the confessional. Most say they listen and forget but he did not. I stopped ever going to him for confession.
3283. The nature of the sin can make it difficult, especially when verbalizing sins for the first time. With God's Grace I have been able to move beyond the sin and make amends to do better.
3284. In my young adulthood when I was first married, I had priests who simply weren't faithful to the teachings of the church. At a time when my wife and I were starting a family, I was not encouraged to be faithful but rather I was essentially given a pass to use contraception. What would my life be like, what would the world be like, if we had had a larger family? Who are the grandchildren I will never know? I feel robbed. Don't tell me things aren't practical or possible, tell me of all that is possible with God. Life is tough but God is bigger than all my challenges.
3285. While preparing to lead a Christ Renews His Parish, a visiting priest, when I told him that I was having angry feelings toward my ex husband, told me that divorce was wrong, and that I needed to work to get back together. He didn't know me or any of my circumstances.
3286. A visiting priest was in the confessional and he was mean and angry and had me in tears. He asked me if I knew about Vatican II.
3287. In another state, I went to confession three days before the election in 2020, I had a face-to-face confession in front of the altar. I told the priest I was having arguments with my progressive daughter and as a Catholic we must always fight for the unborn. He said don't worry it will all be over in a few days when we elect a new president. He said the election is about more than one issue and that immigration and climate are as important as abortion. I could not believe a man of God sitting in the Lord's house before the tabernacle said this. I was in shock.
3288. A confessor sat with his eyes closed and did not actually acknowledge my presence or say one word other than the words of absolution. The priest repeatedly did this.
3289. When confessors are too tied to the "proper" form and mandate the "correct response" before giving absolution. There's no feeling of God's love for the sinner.
3290. When I was younger and felt very sinful, it was hard to go to confession thinking the priest knew who I was.

3291. A priest appeared angry to be at our youth retreat hearing so many confessions. I was an adult leader. He told me to read the whole Catechism as a penance. Then I realized how long it was. Later another priest lifted that penance.
3292. The most difficult times were when a priest said I was allowed only to say one sin, told me something was not a sin, expressed that a particular sin was a woman's problem and wouldn't be understood by a man.
3293. Many years ago when confession was just confessing your sins and getting penance. There wasn't really discussion.
3294. As a young girl, sitting in a tiny room with a strange, albeit kind, man went against all I had ever been taught. I was terribly uncomfortable, even though I had very kind priests.
3295. Feeling like I don't deserve to be there.
3296. When priests seem annoyed to be there, or don't listen.
3297. Years ago I had a priest who wanted to be a therapist. It was difficult to get him to hear sins.
3298. When a priest flies through confession at record speed.
3299. I've never had any difficult experiences in Confession, other than when I was much younger and felt so self-conscious about confessing certain sins that I would leave some out.
3300. I have never felt comfortable in face-to-face confession. Both options (in a confessional or face-to-face) should be offered.
3301. Just the nerves that I'm not doing or saying the right thing.
3302. When I have felt like the priest was just rushing things, clocking in and out.
3303. It's hard when the priest sounds as if he just wants to say, "Next!," and get you out of there.
3304. Sometimes I wait too long between confessions and it is difficult to remember all of my sins.
3305. I'm always nervous going. I feel that the confessor is going to think badly of me. I go at least six times a year and it never gets easy.
3306. When a priest tried to rationalize the sin as not really being a sin, when I knew it was a sin.
3307. A priest suggested I should take medicine to help me feel better about myself, when I was clearly in agony from a sin I was having a hard time breaking.
3308. It's very difficult going when the priest just gives absolution and that's it.
3309. When I was a young adult I confessed a sin of impurity, and the priest was only interested in whether I had had an abortion. I really needed help and encouragement to address that sin, and it didn't feel like he heard me, like he didn't see how much pain and destruction just the impurity caused. It was hard to confess that sin and hard to struggle against it, and it was defeating not to be heard.
3310. My most difficult was probably when I was younger and new to the sacrament. I felt I would think of things I needed to talk about, but when I was in front of a priest, I went to my defaults of lying to my parents, and fighting with my siblings, because after all, those two were a guarantee.
3311. When I've received judgment and harsh words.
3312. Going to confess to a priest who is trying to make English their second language and being asked to repeat my sins and speak very slowly.

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3313. I once had a priest who used the “treat ‘em and street ‘em” methodology for moving us through his confessional. I think he was vying for top position on the confessional leaderboard or trying to get a confessional bonus!
3314. If I feel like he didn’t listen, I wonder if it counts. I know it does, but it doesn’t feel like it should.
3315. I had bad experiences a couple of times with a priest who raised his voice.
3316. The sense of embarrassment when I’ve forgotten my sins because I was so nervous.
3317. I felt as if the priest was judgmental.
3318. When you’re face-to-face with a priest, it is a bit unnerving.
3319. I still needed to talk and the priest told me to stop.
3320. As a child in the 60s, a particular priest made me feel afraid in the confessional.
3321. I have been made to feel guilty by being given extreme penance that I didn't think I deserved.
3322. I don’t like the feeling that I’m being rushed or that the priest isn’t really paying attention to what I am saying.
3323. When I was in my 20s a priest refused to give me absolution for premarital sex.
3324. I have never liked the darkness of the confessional.
3325. I had not gone to confession for a long while. Upon building up the courage to return, the priest asked deep involved questions regarding sins. I thought that it was unnecessary. He would also direct line of questioning to what he felt was more important, not the fact of my returning to confession, or to allow my examination of conscience to come out.
3326. One time a boomer told me my obvious sins weren't sins.
3327. The most difficult part has been getting myself to go.
3328. When it was hard to confess a very serious sin and priest didn't appear to listen and just seemed to want to dismiss me.
3329. I always prefer to confess with a screen. It seems like ever since Covid, screens are becoming more rare.
3330. I’ve had two. One was with an indifferent priest, another with a confessor who just wanted to hear the sins.
3331. Being told I didn’t need to go to confession and then not receiving a penance. I left the confessional and had to go to another parish down the road.
3332. Only on my end, with certain things I needed to confess.
3333. Priests looking over my shoulder to the next person like they were bored with me. Being scolded. Saying something difficult and being told it wasn’t a big deal at all.
3334. When I was kept in confession for a long time for the priest to talk about things he thought were important but took a long time to say.
3335. When a priest told me my sins weren’t actually sins. They were in fact grave sins. He argued they weren’t and therefore I didn’t need absolution.
3336. I once had a priest tell me that something wasn’t a sin. He didn’t explain and was dismissive. I stopped going for a while because I said, “Why bother?”
3337. Many of the priest confessors I have celebrated with are joyful in the Sacrament. On a pilgrimage, one priest commented that I was not serious about my sins and the Sacrament because of my joy and hope.
3338. A priest "chastised" me for not knowing the response at the end of reconciliation.

3339. I was interrupted by a priest who rushed me along. Mass was starting soon, but I felt it could have been handled more gently than he handled it. I felt flustered and that I didn't have time to recall the sins I wanted to confess.
3340. When I was younger, our priest didn't have the best bedside manner.
3341. When I have had done sins that I know are wrong but I'm too embarrassed to confess them, knowing that the priest knows who I am and what must he think of me is frightening.
3342. Long ago I had a priest yell at me, which was upsetting.
3343. I once had a priest sound disgusted when I told him something bad that had happened to me, as if he figured it was my fault.
3344. I've had some priests who want confession said a particular way, for instance, "number and kind" and no elaboration. I try but have a very hard time thinking that way.
3345. There is a young priest who I guess is trying to show he understands, but he makes assumptions that are wrong and I haven't prepared to have to fully explain a complicated situation. I never before have had a priest completely misunderstand a situation the way this one has. He has done it two or three times now, and I don't ever want to go back to him. These have not been sins that needed further explanation. It just seems that he thinks it's a good thing to make guesses about what's going on. It's though he thinks he can read souls--but he's always completely wrong.
3346. When I was asked follow up questions in a harsh manner.
3347. Many years ago, a priest took what my friend told him in confession and confronted me about it. I was mortified.
3348. A priest told me during two separate Confessions that I should never skip Communion, despite the mortal sin I'd just confessed, and that priests often hold the Eucharist hostage. He said everyone should receive Communion as often as the Eucharist is presented to them, no matter what. I was heartbroken.
3349. Only if I get the sense of being rushed or that the priest is not listening.
3350. Once a confessor yelled at me.
3351. I think the worst experiences are when the Confession feels rushed. My current pastor finishes Confession in less than two minutes. I realize that Confession is not a therapy session, but it also should not be treated like an assembly line.
3352. One priest took 15-20 minutes per person. I thought this would be a three-minute experience and it took an hour and half to enter confessional.
3353. I've had a confessor who is extremely scrupulous, and gives inappropriate advice or penances.
3354. As a child I was taught a "new," less formal form of Confession. Later I was yelled at and taken to task by a priest for "doing it wrong." Now past middle age, I still get nervous and worry that I'm not making a good Confession.
3355. I have met some priests who come across as cold and want to rush you.
3356. A priest who isn't welcoming.
3357. The feeling of shame in confessing my sins. The silence of the priest.
3358. Admitting sin is hard, but knowing that God is merciful is priceless.
3359. Availability has been a real difficulty.
3360. I list my sins efficiently, but some priests still don't let me finish before giving advice.
3361. When a priest yelled at me. It still happens. I am a recent convert.

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3362. Once a priest suggested I wasn't really making a good confession, that maybe I needed to think more about what I needed to confess. I had prepared genuinely and it was difficult to admit my sins.
3363. A priest spoke about himself and just about ignored my weaknesses and hurts.
3364. Sometimes it's difficult to really open up, but the Lord helps me to know that he is the one absolving my sins and giving me his blessing through the Father.
3365. I had one uncomfortable experience in Nebraska many years ago. I was honestly confessing my sin of gluttony. After I mentioned that sin, the priest was suddenly annoyed and a little hostile. I was confused by the change in demeanor until I realized that the priest was a little portly. I felt bad about that confession for a long time.
3366. When I was in grade school, the priest thought I had said 6 months since my last confession instead of 6 weeks and that's all he concentrated on.
3367. Long lines that made it impossible to go before Saturday Mass.
3368. The old religious order priest whose breath smelled awful and who used phrases like "Hold Jesus to your breasts."
3369. One priest mocked my being uncomfortable with using the screen rather than face-to-face.
3370. A priest interrupted my confessing something I remembered from my past, saying it had already been forgiven, even though I certainly did not think so and had worked up the courage (and the gratitude) to confess it.
3371. When the priest scoffs at a serious spiritual matter or sin as if it's no big deal and you know better.
3372. Sometimes the attitude of the confessor, or his demeanor may bring about a sense of alienation.
3373. Feeling rushed or like the priest is simply there to give me a "fast food" confession.
3374. Opening up about sensitive topics is not always comfortable, like sexuality, or indecent thoughts.
3375. Feeling a bit rushed.
3376. Just being nervous for no reason. I talk myself out of going.
3377. When I was scolded and told only to list the number and kind of sins
3378. When the priest was excessively harsh.
3379. It always throws me off when a priest doesn't say the whole formula for Absolution.
3380. I once had a priest laugh at one of the most malicious sins I had (ever) committed. He thought it was funny what I did.
3381. Priests have tried to justify why my sins aren't sins, when they clearly are according to the traditional understanding of sin.
3382. When I've had priests eager to get me out of the confessional.
3383. Not difficult, but I have felt like I've gotten a once-size-fits-all penance in the past.
3384. Once I went to confession and our retired bishop was in there. It freaked me out, and I left.
3385. Many times I haven't been heard.
3386. When the priest called me by name. I guess he recognized my voice.
3387. I've had shame and fear of forgetting things, as well as how my pride might interfere with the process.
3388. When the priest would not absolve me as I was cohabiting with a woman after divorcing and pre-annulment, it was hard for me to accept.

3389. Having to make an appointment to go to confession.
3390. I never know if I made a "good" confession or stated my sins correctly.
3391. My difficulty is the schedule. No confessions are available during weekdays other than first Friday which is a long line.
3392. It is always difficult to confess serious sins, but I have never experienced any fear or embarrassment from any confessor - just the peace of forgiveness.
3393. Going face-to-face and seeing the shocked look on the priest's face. Face-to-face confession is difficult for me because I was sexually abused and being in a closed room with a man is hard for me.
3394. Language barriers have been difficult.
3395. Time constraints.
3396. I have had confessors yell. I have had venial sins magnified as if they were like gateway drugs!
3397. The most difficult thing is getting to Confession. It is rarely offered. It's hard for a parent of children to be free at Saturday at 4 pm. I would like it to be available before Mass.
3398. Two times I had priests make up their own words of absolution. My confession was therefore invalid and I had to confess my sins again.
3399. I had a horrible confession experience in which a priest didn't want to hear my confession, rushed me and said, "Get to the sin. Get to the sin. The things you're saying aren't sins." He said it with no kindness at all. When I decided to excuse myself and told him I would seek confession elsewhere, he gave me absolution without even hearing my confession and said I should seek therapy.
3400. When a priest grilled me on why I sinned. I'm talking venial sins. I haven't been to confession for a year now because my parish priest does this and I have anxiety disorders.
3401. The first time I did a confession, I forgot how to start the confession off. The priest had to help me.
3402. Sometimes it is difficult to confess my wrongdoings, as I do not always want to admit that I have sinned.
3403. As a kid, I had a priest yell at me. I stayed away from it for many years after that. I'm 60 and now only have good experiences.
3404. I was told that I had committed a mortal sin when one Sunday I went to a Protestant Church when I had no way of getting to the Catholic Mass.
3405. My biggest difficulty is I can't seem to remember the entire Act of Contrition.
3406. I rarely have bad experiences, but sometimes the confessor is too quick or gives banal advice.
3407. We moved to a new diocese that only offered confession 1-2 times per week. It made it difficult to go because I did not have anyone to help with my children during those advertised times.
3408. Sometimes I feel embarrassed for committing the same sins again and again.
3409. One time, many years ago, the priest cut me off and said, "That's enough for one confession," which made me feel awful and ashamed. Upon reflection later, I realized this had more to do with the priest than my confession.

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3410. During confession with a priest I know quite well, he took the conversation into a direction that geared it toward himself and I left with a feeling that I had ministered to him. I don't think that is appropriate.
3411. Sometimes the priest was distracted and I did not feel he was really listening.
3412. When I ask a question that seems like it should have a clear answer, I get different answers from different priests.
3413. When I was a little girl, a priest got mad at me when I thought I was done with confessing my sins and said, "That's all Father." Maybe it was the way I said it.
3414. Sometimes I have had surface level confessions and not gotten to the heart of what was leading to sin.
3415. The difficulty is verbalizing my sins and dealing with my own embarrassment.
3416. A priest made me read almost an entire magazine for my penance and it didn't relate to the sin. I heard he has since left the priesthood.
3417. Sometimes the priest seems to want to hurry me through my confession by not responding to what I say or responding with brief generic comments and speeding through absolution.
3418. I once had a priest answer a phone call while I was confessing.
3419. One priest consistently cut in before I finished sharing even a short list of things. This was very frustrating and discouraging. Sometimes priests only offer very superficial or brief responses if any, and this makes me feel like they aren't engaged or invested in my spiritual growth.
3420. I had a horrible experience in Confession recently. I sat down and the priest did nothing. I had to be the one who led the sign of the cross at the beginning. After I finished confessing, he said, "OK. Do you have any questions for me?" which was an odd question. Then he told me to do whatever penance. I felt was appropriate. It was so weird and off-putting. God forbid someone who hadn't been to Confession in a while went to him, because he did not guide the Sacrament at all. It was so upsetting.
3421. A priest screamed and scolded me when I was 11 years old because I missed Mass the previous Sunday. He went on to tell me I had terrible parents. I yelled back and told him Jesus would never do that to me.
3422. The Priest was very harsh on me. I was elementary school age. That has left a life long negative stain on confession.
3423. I had a rude priest.
3424. When I have had to go face-to-face with the priest. I would prefer the screen.
3425. Sometimes it has felt too rote or the priest behaved as if I didn't have any reason to be there. Once a priest said, strangely, "Stop before you go any further. Remember I know the situation." I had no idea what he was talking about.
3426. It's hard when the priest gives a scripted response that does not address my personal sins. I leave feeling confused and disappointed.
3427. I can't recall difficult experiences, but there are some confessors much better than others. Some priests receptive to helping me go deeper into my sins and the reasons for them and give advice on how to handle them..
3428. I think the priest could not hear me well and he gave absolution partway through. I guess it still counted, as I had intended to finish!
3429. Sometimes I've had to confess face-to-face with a priest I didn't feel comfortable with and didn't really want to share with. On those occasions, I hold back and really don't

confess properly. Hidden-face confessions (or whatever traditional way is called) would be better in those instances.

3430. I'm a little claustrophobic. So I prefer to have an open dialogue with the priest, as in a communal service.
3431. A priest made a negative comment, failed to understand what I was trying to say, and sounded bored.
3432. Sometimes there are language issues, when the priest's accent makes it difficult to understand what he is telling me.
3433. The greatest difficulty I've encountered has been the long line waiting to go to Confession and only having one priest hearing.
3434. Not enough opportunities to go to confession. Too few times offered.
3435. I prefer the anonymity of the confessional. Probably my most difficult experiences have been when I needed to confess to the priest face-to-face, and in one instance where there was someone else in the room.
3436. Overcoming my pride and ego, accepting I have sinned and then confessing my sins.
3437. It was with a very old-fashioned priest from a different culture. He wasn't compassionate and a little aggressive.
3438. When I was in college and confessed to missing Mass on a couple of occasions to study, I was told to get my priorities straight and given as a penance enough Our Fathers and Hail Marys for a criminal.
3439. I was scolded, which made me feel uncomfortable. I knew I sinned and already was ashamed. To be yelled at made it only worse. Fear is not what I look for when going to Reconciliation.
3440. The priest did not think that what I was saying was that important. It was important to me, though, enough to come to confession.
3441. All of them are hard for me. I'm a convert so even after over 10 years, it's still hard.
3442. Questions, questions, with a sense of judgment.
3443. Being lectured
3444. It's hard when you don't know how to express yourself.
3445. When the priest was in a rush and cut my confession off. I didn't have a chance to confess all of my sins.
3446. I've found it hard when a priest does not give you any direction. It makes you feel like you are in a waiting line in an office or bank. He just gives you the blessing of absolution and you can almost hear, "Next."
3447. Talking about a sexually inappropriate act that was done to me by a family priest when I was a boy. I had never talked about this before with anyone in the Church. But I am glad I did and did so in confession.
3448. The priest once fell asleep during my Confession. Other than that, I have had mostly good experiences.
3449. I've been refused absolution because the Confessor didn't see any sin. I try to go monthly to get the sacramental grace, but I've been told I don't have to, especially at my advanced age.
3450. I had a difficult experience that has haunted me from the time I was a young teenager. The subject dealt with masturbation and the priest's advice and responses at that time were over the top and I felt inaccurate, particularly for my age at the time. It was very scary!

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3451. Overcoming embarrassment at my own behaviors and sinfulness.
3452. Once I had a confessor who appeared to fall asleep as I was confessing.
3453. I found it hard to explain the circumstances of one of my sins once, and the priest misunderstood me, became angered and started chewing me out.
3454. When priests have been too busy to really listen or give any feedback.
3455. I confessed I hated Donald Trump. The priest launched into a diatribe on the evils of the liberal agenda including abortion. It made me angry. I didn't go again for a year and a half.
3456. Once I had the priest shut the screen on me while I was still saying the act of contrition.
3457. Confession is difficult when a priest changes the order of the rite or gets too chatty.
3458. My worst experience was when I didn't receive a penance. The confession became extremely long because the priest kept talking. I finally asked for my penance and the priest seemed surprised.
3459. When I encountered a disinterested, rushed priest. He didn't ask or want me to say the act of contrition.
3460. It's difficult when the confessor just follows the outline for the sacrament as liturgically prescribed and assigns rote prayers for my penance. This is not growth producing.
3461. I have not had a bad experience, but one of my young children has and was upset afterwards. The priest told him, why my son was stumbling through the act of contrition, "That was terrible. Do it better next time."
3462. Not in confession but I have had difficulty finding a good examination of conscience that concentrates more on sins of omission.
3463. I am embarrassed when I sometimes go to confession and have to confess the same thing over and over.
3464. I'm afraid to be honest about my sins because I think I have to be perfect and it's bad to be a sinner.
3465. I'm afraid of some "mean" priests, which makes it harder to "see" Jesus in the sacrament.
3466. I grew up thinking it is bad to say your sins, so I would say the same thing over and over and not really say the sins I was committing. That took years to be able to do.
3467. I don't want to be judged by the priests who know me for the sins I commit.
3468. When much younger, I felt as if I made the priest angry and I was being judged.
3469. I have had priests yell at me.
3470. There was a time when I could not go to a certain confessor because his response to sin was to load the guilt on before absolution.
3471. I had a terrible time talking about my feelings after suffering an assault. While the priest was kind, his comments could have been more compassionate.
3472. It is sometimes difficult humbling myself to confess major sins.
3473. When the priest asked, "Are you sorry?" I was sorry after the sin happened. It was hard in the confessional to have the same emotional response. I never went to him again. I had taken the time and effort to be there.
3474. I received bad advice from a priest. Basically what he told me was a sin. I never went to him again. I said to myself that what he said was not the Holy Spirit.
3475. When a priest lacked sympathy. I never went to him again.

3476. A priest once yelled at my sister for not knowing her act of contrition. She never went to confession again. It has been 40 years and she still has not gone back.
3477. Once I was making my confession at a communal penance and the priest was watching other things that were going on. He wasn't even listening.
3478. At times, I haven't been as prepared as I would've liked, and found it hard to express myself clearly.
3479. Impatience from priest while I tell him my sins. He probably was in a rush.
3480. My only difficulty was a confessor who excused a serious sin that I was committing regularly.
3481. When priests have told me that I go to confession too often!
3482. Getting reprimanded, judged, and yelled at.
3483. Saying the same thing every confession. Overcoming the shame to tell my true sins.
3484. Aside from a time when the priest said he couldn't hear me, no real difficult experiences.
3485. When I'm nervous, due to lack of preparation on my end. Sometimes I forgot the prayers or what to say.
3486. Once my confessor was not sure whether he could absolve me, what the current Church teaching was on a topic, and whether or not it still carried the penalty of excommunication. I had to come back. It took so much out of me actually to go to confession only to be told that I needed to come back.
3487. When the priest has talked more about himself than trying to help me.
3488. I once had a priest who seemed angry, not merciful.
3489. I was poorly catechized and have had to figure things out as I go. It is awful not to know what I'm doing and then to be dealt with in a dismissive way. Recently my challenge going to confession for overcoming venial sins. Some priests do not want to hear confession of only venial sin. For me, the accumulation of venial sins is a barrier to growth in holiness.
3490. There have been times when I felt as if the confessor was simply going through the motions.
3491. One time I could see through the screen that the priest was playing a game on his phone while hearing my confession.
3492. When I was asked to reconcile with a person I had wronged as my form of penance.
3493. I can't say I've had any difficult experiences. Sometimes if the experience feels rushed, or if I have not really done a good examination of conscience, it may be less satisfactory and not quite feel like the sacrament that it is.
3494. Only a few times, when it was clear that the priest himself had unresolved issues and was therefore not able to understand me. He responded to my sin with anger or a clear lack of understanding.
3495. I find it difficult when a priest attempts to summarize my confession of sins and failings with blanket statements like "You are selfish."
3496. I personally get very emotional. Tears flow easily. I am always worried coming out of the Confessional before my children and they would see my tears and worry something awful happened in there! I try to explain ahead of time.
3497. The only difficult experience I had was when the priest who was annoyed that I did not know the act of contrition.

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3498. In Confession, it has been difficult at times to tell priests certain things such as my type of sin, because I wasn't sure how the priests would react.
3499. It's also hard when priests are arrogant.
3500. If I am rushed or the priest is hard of hearing, these hurt the sacramental experience.
3501. Most of the time it is difficult. Priests often appear judgmental from the outset. They love to ask, "Is that all?" and mumble if you don't come in with a long list.
3502. The priest asked questions that had nothing to do with the confession, or so I thought. I never went back to him.
3503. My only difficulty has been my own pride, which has held me back from going to confession.
3504. There have been times where there was a very long line or I was near the end of the allotted time for confession where the priest had to go get ready for mass or move onto another responsibility so it felt very rushed. One time in particular, I entered the confessional and was immediately (politely) asked by the priest to be brief. I understand they need to try and hear everyone's confessions, so I don't blame the priest, but it certainly didn't feel like a very sincere experience, when I briefly listed my sins and was told to go pray three Hail Marys.
3505. One time a priest said to me, "Is that all?," in a tone of voice that suggested he didn't believe that I had only committed a few venial sins.
3506. A priest refused to hear my confession. He would not listen to my explanation of why I needed it.
3507. When I was a teen, my confessor spoke of my sins very loudly and my parents heard his every word. I'll never forget the look on my Dad's face when I walked out of the confessional. I was so angry at that priest for violating the confidentiality of my confession. It seemed to me it was done deliberately.
3508. Once a priest scolded me during confession.
3509. I think the most difficult are when the priest doesn't start by saying a few words so you know he's ready. It's also more difficult when they don't say anything but the required penance and absolution.
3510. Whenever the situation has been hurried, it feels like the sacrament is not important.
3511. Going to confession when I haven't been in a long time. Getting over the embarrassment and shame I feel.
3512. I made my First Confession in the early seventies, and looking back I was not given much, if any teaching about the Sacrament of Confession. I have had to learn it on my own.
3513. The first time I returned to the Sacrament, the priest asked me why I hadn't been, and I said because I didn't believe in it. He scolded me and said, "But you believed in the Eucharist?"
3514. I've had some priests show little understanding of my faults and failures. This made me feel as though there was no forgiveness for me.
3515. Being forced to sit face-to-face with the priest for confession.
3516. A priest once stopped me from confessing the sins of my youth that I had never specifically confessed before. He was in a hurry to get through the line of penitents.
3517. I have had priests misunderstand what I was saying, and even get upset with me for saying certain things.

3518. I was scolded for having a different political view than the priest. I left and had to go to confession again for anger at him over something that was really a matter of prudential judgment.
3519. It's been difficult having access to confession. It went from daily before Mass and on Saturdays to having now to make appointments.
3520. Nothing other than facing my own failures. Many times I felt the priest was disconnected and could be doing this by remote control.
3521. No, I haven't. Arguably the most comforting experiences of my life occurred in the confessional!
3522. When I was first a parent, trying to be "perfect" for my baby, I didn't feel like I could go to confession. I would go to the service and just cry because I was not this perfect being. I struggle at times getting to confession because I just don't want to admit when I am not the person God created me to be.
3523. When I was young, I was petrified to go to confession. I was embarrassed and didn't want to tell a priest what I had done.
3524. In preparing for confession, I realized I had a trend to commit certain sins more than I thought. It was very difficult to admit to myself that tendency and then to admit it again in confession.
3525. When the priest gives a difficult penance that lasts for a week. This made it hard for me to move past my discretions, as it continued to remind me about my shortcomings.
3526. A condescending priest was belittling and critical about my coming back to confession after a very long time. It made me afraid to go again.
3527. My personal difficulties, getting emotional and having difficulty getting the words out.
3528. Knowing the Confessor too well.
3529. One priest asked me to say a prayer every day that I had never heard of. I said, "I don't know that one," and explained that I was a convert. He told me how it started so I could find it!
3530. I have trouble discussing some personal things with a man.
3531. Not having enough space and privacy from other penitents.
3532. It was difficult for me to confess something I did. It had nothing to do with the priest.
3533. The priest suggested a spiritual advisor. I do not want to do that.
3534. When I was pregnant with twins and didn't come to Mass, a priest told me I should have crawled to church rather than miss.
3535. I've had one or two confessors (not in my parish) who are impatient with my getting my words out so we can be finished.
3536. It is hard to look face-to-face at someone and tell him your worst actions or feelings. That is probably the best way to do it though, to feel as you are looking into the eyes of Christ.
3537. There was one time when I felt a little like I was being scolded for one of my sins.
3538. Once the priest actually interrupted me before I finished my confession and told me that was enough.
3539. I was told to pick my own penance.
3540. Face-to-face is always difficult.
3541. I've been fearful of confessing certain sins for fear of what the priest might say.

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3542. I have never had a bad experience in Confession. It did take me a while to open up to face-to-face confessions, though.
3543. When a priest did not give me absolution.
3544. A priest once yelled at me for confessing a sin I had persisted in for a few years in college. It was certainly wrong to commit that sin, but also I had a conversion and grew in understanding of why it was wrong and had resolved to change my life. I didn't deserve to be yelled at for something in the past that I wasn't defending.
3545. No difficulties except the usual one about being humble enough to ask for forgiveness.
3546. When I've done something wrong and resisted appropriate restitution.
3547. It's been more difficult when I haven't gone in a while. I've never had a difficult time with the priest.
3548. The only difficulties have come when I haven't done a full examination of conscience prior to confession, and so was not fully prepared.
3549. As a young man, dealing with the reality of what I had done and admitting it.
3550. Telling a priest about my upcoming divorce. I was in tears and could hardly speak.
3551. Being embarrassed with what I had to confess. I avoided going to our parish priest because he knows me and I would go to a different church for confession. Then I realized this was stupid and now I go to my parish priest.
3552. Sitting in a room face-to-face with the priest.
3553. It has felt sometimes like an assembly line.
3554. The sins I committed made it difficult.
3555. Wondering if I was forgiven of the sins.
3556. When a priest says nothing, and only gives absolution. This seems to devalue the Sacrament's purpose.
3557. While in Madrid, I attempted to go to confession in Spain, which is my second language. It was a mistake. I did not know the normal things to say in Spanish and I didn't have the vocabulary to understand the priest.
3558. Once I was scolded harshly because I was confessing masturbation and told the priest that I had received communion without confession. He gave me for penance to pray the rosary. I asked if he could give me something else because that was a lot and I was not very Marian. He said no, that was my penance.
3559. Just feeling like a part of an assembly line passing through.
3560. Before Vatican II, I was young, scared and hated that black box.
3561. I once went to confession at an unfamiliar church, and felt judged and shamed by the priest. It hurt me deeply for months.
3562. After absolution, the priest used the sacred space to accuse me of being disloyal to him, telling me I had lied and made him look bad, that I needed to change my story and lots more! I felt backed up against a wall and very hurt because none of it was true. I had to look for the sacrament in another parish after that! He "abused" me with his words and angered face!
3563. Once when the priest was elderly and had trouble hearing.
3564. I've often wondered if confession is still considered by the Church a sacrament. Confession times are so few and limited. Churches need to offer regular confession to meet people's needs, other than just before Mass. I know of a church that offers

weekday confessions in the late afternoon, and frequently see teens, business people, parents, and retirees waiting in line.

3565. One time I walked into a double confessional (where the priest is in the middle) and he didn't close the screens in between confessions so you could literally hear the whole confession of the person in the other confessional as you waited.
3566. I missed Mass while on vacation. I went to Mass and communion the following Sunday. When I told the priest, he would not give me absolution.
3567. I've had some difficulties with overbearing priests who make quick assumptions and are dismissive.
3568. Coming up with a list of sins that don't sound trivial.
3569. The priest told me to hurry up because there is a line. He told me to stop crying. I was clearly seven months pregnant and tears were just part of the pregnant journey. He went through the motions of giving absolution. It was uninspiring.
3570. Just having ready access during the pandemic.
3571. One Saturday afternoon I arrived for Confession, scheduled from 3 to 3:45, and got into line, a few minutes after 3. At 3:45, Father left, leaving me and others who were waiting.
3572. When I confess sins of the flesh, I feel like the priest is sometimes judgmental.
3573. Face-to-face confessions make me feel judged.
3574. There was one time when a priest cut me off and asked if there was anything else. I wasn't as prepared as I usually am, and I guess I was rambling.
3575. Confessing the same sins over and over.
3576. I have encountered priests who, due to the number of penitents, needed me to hurry up. I was crying because I was so upset, but instead of acknowledging my distress, he wanted me to confess and get out. I was discombobulated. When I am distressed and it's apparent, I think it would be most helpful if the priest could guide me through the rubrics of evaluating my conscience.
3577. When the priest is shocked or upset.
3578. The priest was only interested in the "big sins" and not in my becoming a better follower of Christ.
3579. When I felt judged or ignored in my confession of serious sins.
3580. One time I went face-to-face with a visiting priest. I was 19 and kind of cute. After confessing my sins, he asked me three times if I had any sins of impurity. I didn't, and told him so three times. I figured he either was calling me a liar, or was a pervert wanting me to talk about sex. It ruined me for a while. I didn't go to confession for 15 years after that.
3581. I don't like it when the priest is terse or is just like, "Yeah, say an Our Father. Bye." It's also not great when he tells you something isn't a sin but you know it is.
3582. I fell away from the sacrament for almost 20 years because I was afraid to confess something. I was sure the priest would go ballistic and yell at me, and wouldn't absolve me, and would excommunicate me. Even after I returned, I was scared to death that one day I would go to confession and the priest wouldn't think I was really sorry, and wouldn't give me absolution. It was just a matter of time. For some reason, none of the priests that I spoke to ever said it is very rare for someone not to receive absolution. One day as I was reading a book on confession, it finally set in that it is

normal to fall into committing the same sins from time to time, and the only sin that is unforgivable, is the unconfessed sin.

3583. A foreign priest who couldn't understand me or I him.
3584. No difficulty other than shame
3585. The difficulty was bringing myself back to the Sacrament, humbling myself to confess and trust in the forgiveness and mercy.
3586. As a senior, it is difficult to kneel in confessional. I am unable to get back up.
3587. Only with my ego and pride. The priests have all been wonderful.
3588. Lack of warmth from the priest. I felt he looked at hearing confession as just another part of his "job."
3589. When I've had a difficult or dogmatic priest
3590. One time went to a big shrine. During the confession, the priest led me to believe he would not give absolution without me saying a rosary every day. I told him I would not receive absolution if I needed to say the rosary every day (not because I do not like the Rosary but because I knew I would eventually fail in doing so). To his credit he backed off and said I should say it more often, which I agreed to.
3591. Feeling that I'm just another number.
3592. Crazy as it seems, I haven't. Even when I had to confess my extra martial affair, the priest was compassionate but firm in the church's teaching.
3593. The confessor, I felt, "judged" the quality of my confession and said I was wasting his time. It so offended me that it put me off from going.
3594. As a child and teenager, it seemed as though the focus was on examining how "bad" I was behaving. Even as my faith grew stronger in my 20s and 30s, I was reluctant to attend Confession. I was afraid that I would be judged harshly by the priests, not only for what I was confessing, but by the fact that I couldn't remember the Act of Contrition by heart.
3595. I find them all difficult because I have no idea what I'm doing or what to expect.
3596. Sometimes the priest has judged and chastised me. He had an attitude of superiority, not empathy.
3597. A priest was impatient with what I had to say, clearly wanting me to hurry up during a parish-wide penance service.
3598. One priest focused on my having not been to confession in a year rather than on what I was confessing.
3599. It is always difficult for me to go to confession.
3600. I have had no bad experiences, but some family members have, on questions of remarriage, gays and those not married in the Church.
3601. I have been scolded a few times, and actually yelled at by one priest, loudly enough that they could hear him halfway across the church. One priest was very much "the boss" and you didn't dare speak up in any attempt to defend or explain yourself.
3602. One time a woman in line ahead of me was in the confessional for over 15 minutes. I could hear raised voices and then she ran out of there in tears. Witnessing this was upsetting, and certainly didn't inspire the rest of us to confess that day!
3603. Some priests seem not to think that anything is a sin. If I come and am troubled from what I have done, the priest should respect that and not brush it off.
3604. When the priest is tired and doesn't appear to be listening.

3605. When I've been given the sense that I need to rush when I really want to "talk about it" and get some help.
3606. I've had some minor difficulty when the confessor is unknown to me and not very engaging.
3607. Just my own difficulties in admitting to sin.
3608. In college I had a bad experience with a parish priest who was impatient with me. I had no formal Catholic education and he took my ignorance for carelessness.
3609. I had a priest who in confession tried to hypnotize me and began to touch me. I was not hypnotized and I pulled away. He stopped. I was left shaken.
3610. A priest who had plenty of time rushed through the sacrament, made assumptions about me, and I left angry due to his judgmentalism and bad advice.
3611. As a child I was sexually abused. When I spoke to the confessor about being angry about what happened to me, he blamed me.
3612. Unfortunately I have had a few difficult experiences, especially when I was once literally yelled at for having committed a sin.
3613. I've been frustrated when priests give vague or mushy penances. Please give something concrete and immediately doable.
3614. It's difficult when a priest changes the words of absolution. It seems a basic professional courtesy for priests to say the words that the Church has given for absolution. I've had to ask a priest to use the right words, which was very awkward and made me very angry.
3615. I've suffered from priests who show up late for confessions, regularly. It's inexcusable, really. Penitents waiting in line for confession are already vulnerable and when their priest habitually runs late, it leads penitents to worry, to have uncharitable thoughts, to anxiety, etc.
3616. The nature of the sins I was confessing were hard to admit to.
3617. I don't like face-to-face, but because of a knee problem I don't seem to have a choice. I'm not supposed to kneel.
3618. Not really, but many confessions are too hurried, in and out.
3619. It's still hard to go. I know my sins but it's hard to tell them to another person and trust that they really won't repeat anything.
3620. Once I interpreted a priest's comments as blaming me for my husband's problems.
3621. It is just very hard to tell your sins to someone that you see often, like your parish priest. He may not judge but it is hard for people not to think differently of you.
3622. After I felt I had poured my heart out, a priest impatiently asked if that was all I had to say.
3623. I got advice from a priest that made me think he didn't care or was not concerned about my situation. I was expecting some guidance, not a quick fix.
3624. The priest treated the Sacrament as if it were a turnstile activity.
3625. Being really embarrassed that "that" was the sin I fell to, and that the priest would recognize me because he would know my voice.
3626. Only a few times when I felt the priest didn't care or was being condemnatory.
3627. For me, it's been mostly the difficult experience of needing to go, but being unable, due to other penitents' taking an unduly long time.

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3628. The sacrament works even if the priest is less than enthused, but I have encountered priests who are dismissive of sin or who merely observe the mechanics of the sacrament and do not seem engaged with the miracle that is taking place.
3629. When I felt like I was rushed.
3630. There have been a couple of times, many years ago, when I felt preached at and talked down to. Needless to say, I never went back to either of those priests for the sacrament again.
3631. The priest was negative, lectured me to not bother my husband with my concerns, and suggested I pray often that I can be a better wife. These were bizarre suggestions and I hadn't even discussed my husband. I left very saddened and did not feel my sins were forgiven.
3632. When I priest made me feel guilty for having not been to confession in a year. At the time I was going to church multiple times a week, teaching confirmation classes, and very involved in the parish. It made me feel bad.
3633. Sometimes it's difficult to confess some sins either because there is a lot of "background" leading up to the particular sin that takes a long time to outline or because I'm frustrated by continuing to commit the same sins and not really getting any insight into why that might be or how to stop.
3634. I had one confessor give a four-day penance, which was difficult because I can be a bit lazy and careless in my spiritual life. But it was a good difficult because I saw Jesus was trying to help me.
3635. Being made to feel unworthy and judged by the priest's words in response to my sins.
3636. Once a confessor told me that I was intrinsically evil and to leave the confessional. I didn't just leave the confessional, I left the church and mostly left Christianity.
3637. There have been a couple of times when I felt the confessor was in a hurry to get finished with my confession because the line outside the confessional was long.
3638. I've had several difficult experiences. I stayed away for 14 years because a priest was visibly annoyed and rolled his eyes and sighed loudly when I forgot my act of contrition. I was 13 years old. As an adult I've had priests give trite advice (stuff like-make a list!) or ask uncomfortably specific questions about sexual sins. I've had priests who are obviously not listening, or even appear to fall asleep. I've had priests say certain mortal sins aren't even sins!
3639. Only sometimes when priest just wanted to race through the ritual, not really listening to what maybe needed to be discussed. In fairness sometimes there were long lines of people or he needed to say Mass soon.
3640. When I have needed to talk and the priest didn't have the time.
3641. Once, in college, a priest laughed at me during my confession, minimizing the nature of my offense. I left confused and felt judged as naive. Don't know how to explain it but somehow my innocence was lost.
3642. When the lines are horrible and unorganized!
3643. The confessional was too cramped.
3644. When I've encountered a lack of compassion from a priest who was too methodical.
3645. When I felt like I was not being heard and was given a vague penance.
3646. Only one time, about 45 years ago, when I was a teen. An old angry priest told me to stop making trouble for other people.
3647. Not really, just some that offered no counsel.

3648. The difficulty for me is feeling unprepared, not knowing what my sins are, and not wanting to waste the priest's time.
3649. When I felt like my confession was being heard by other people and had to whisper.
3650. Once a priest, during a holy hour, asked me to say confession in the back pew rather than in the confessional. Others were around. Not having the security of privacy was difficult.
3651. When the confessor seems too busy and does not give advice.
3652. I have severe social anxiety and cannot confess without extreme trepidation, fear, regret, etc.
3653. I am a convert. For several years I had immense difficulty with the darkness of the confessional and my need for a written list! Nowadays confessionals are light and I have had years of very positive experiences with a good confessor and it is a long time since I needed that list!
3654. When a priest made me feel ashamed.
3655. Feeling anxious.
3656. When a priest admonished me for my son's confession right before me, for being too scrupulous. I think he thought I was pushing him in that direction, but I wasn't.
3657. Some sins are hard to admit, but the priests have always been patient and understanding.
3658. Sometimes the priest is rushed due to many people at confession during Lent and Advent and the whole experience can feel too rushed.
3659. When I felt as if a priest had his own agenda, not actually listening. He cut me off, misunderstood what I said, and didn't allow me to clarify and explain why I was struggling.
3660. Nothing too difficult. There have been two priests who take a very, very long time with counsel. I know they want to help, but the talk goes on for quite awhile.
3661. The last time I went to Confession, I was preparing to get married. I took the sacrament of marriage seriously, as I did all previous sacraments, and so I wanted to enter into this sacrament in the right way. I made a point to go to Confession a week or two before our wedding. I was really excited. I felt joyful to receive this sacrament before my wedding. In Confession, however, the very socially awkward young priest didn't focus at all on what I was confessing. Instead, he asked pointed and uncomfortable questions about whether I had had premarital sex with my future spouse. He seemed bizarrely fixated on that, and when I said yes, the rest of the time was focused on that and how my marriage was now getting off on the wrong foot. This felt like the exact opposite of the kind of helpful, hopeful message of reconciliation I expected. I understand the Church teachings, of course. But to focus on this detail at the expense of the other, larger issues felt uncomfortable and invasive. Instead of feeling lightened and unburdened, I left feeling shamed and somehow like my privacy had been violated. It didn't feel like a sacrament. It didn't feel like a moment of closeness with God at all. It felt like a human being wanting to know about my sex life.
3662. As a child I had a priest yell at me because he didn't think I knew how to go to confession. I've had others who question me inappropriately. I had one priest who read his text messages as I confessed, not realizing I could see through the screen.

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3663. It's been difficult when schedules have changed, or priests failed to show, or ceased making it easily available. Some overly chatty priests confuse spiritual direction with confession and talk more than they listen. I've also had a few instances with investigative priests trying to dig deep that made it oddly uncomfortable, even though I had done my best to state number, nature and mitigating circumstances.
3664. Yes, but I think it was due to poor religious education on my part.
3665. When I've had priests with judgmental attitudes or unhelpful suggestions.
3666. Usually it's difficult when I have a lot of feelings associated with whatever my sins are and it's hard to get it out. I don't like feeling rushed.
3667. When I'm nervous and forget the Act of contrition. Now I am nervous every time I go.
3668. When I've had judgmental, rushed and seemingly detached and disinterested priests. I also feel dismissed when my penance is something rote like "Say ten Hail Marys."
3669. As a grade school student I was harmed by a family member and confessed it as a sin because I thought it was my fault. I was 6 when the abuse started. The priest told me I was a liar and it was a grave sin to lie in confession. It was very difficult to go to confession for many years and I believe it delayed me telling my parents and putting an end to the abuse sooner. It was damaging. Thankfully, as an adult I was able to get help and my current pastor has helped me feel comfortable in Confession. It took me until my late 30s to get help.
3670. When I was a teen, confessors in the new city we moved to were harsh and made me feel shameful and depressed.
3671. It has always been very difficult for me to go to confession. I have mental and physical issues with it. And now being older and hearing impaired, it has become more difficult. I usually feel more guilty after going to confession.
3672. When the young priest explained that all gay people are condemned to hell, it was a horrible experience. He subsequently left the priesthood when it came out that his girlfriend was pregnant. My gay friends are more faithful to their partners and a loving God than that priest was.
3673. My conscience makes it difficult.
3674. When I receive indifferent replies.
3675. When the priest is aloof. One told me to not cry. He thought I was being too loud.
3676. The most difficult experience was going to confession after only two weeks to confess a serious sin. The priest said, "Is that all? Why are you back so soon if you just went two weeks ago?" He treated me like I was bothering him (even though I went somewhere else two weeks before) and that he didn't have time to deal with such pettiness. I was shocked and have never been back to that Church since.
3677. I'm disappointed when a priest just casually offers the same, simple penance, even for serious sins. I know it shouldn't, but it feels harder for me to let go and forgive myself when the only penance I'm given is one Our Father. I appreciate when a priest tailors the penance to the sin and sinner.
3678. Not really, but several priests have just run through the motions and that's not what I'm looking for.
3679. The lack of availability to the sacrament is sometimes an obstacle.
3680. Yes, when priests have not respected the confidentiality of confession, when they have dismissed anything they consider scrupulous, when they've been impatient, when they've assumed they know my entire story based on a brief glimpse, when they've

minimized the reality of forgiveness, when they've been cynical about conversion and change.

- 3681. When priests are overtired and aren't attentive to the person in front of them.
- 3682. Way back when, a priest right after confession vocally indicated he recognized me. It horrified me because of what I had said.
- 3683. When the priest has been indifference toward sin.
- 3684. In a confessional, not face-to-face, when a confessor dismissed me as "not sincere." I was in a world of pain at the time trying to sort my relationship with God. The confessor was not helpful.
- 3685. The only difficult moments have been when I had to confess really serious sins.
- 3686. When I've had harsh words from the priest.
- 3687. My own shame.
- 3688. Sometimes I have seen the priest reading a book and checking his emails.
- 3689. It's always hard. But it's not about me or what I want.
- 3690. Only on those occasions I've been rushed.
- 3691. When the confessor is just so lenient or quick.
- 3692. Very few, but once a priest from a different country said the words of absolution to himself instead of out loud.
- 3693. Just bringing stuff up that I felt uncomfortable admitting to.
- 3694. When the priest doesn't seem to listen or there's too little time.
- 3695. When I was very young, about 8 or 9. I'm now 65. I confessed that I had looked at myself in the bathtub. I must have been told that was a sin! The priest admonished me and asked, "Would Mother Mary do such a thing? I felt ashamed. I was so innocent!"
- 3696. When the priest gave me a pamphlet about the purpose of veiling sacred things that ended with the reason women veil in church is because their wombs are sacred, so therefore they are sacred. As a women who has no womb, due to problems from c-sections and needing to have it removed, along with massive endometriosis that welded it to my abdominal wall, it was like a slap in the face. Am I not sacred as I no longer have a womb? I only have two living children, as I have had three miscarriages. My worth is not tied to my reproductive cycle, or lack of it, or the lack of it functioning well. I am sacred for being a wonderfully made daughter of God.
- 3697. A priest went on a 45 minute rant about abortion. I don't know what brought it in. Nothing in my confession was about the issue.
- 3698. When priests have been harsh and damning. I have only once found a priest loving and welcoming.
- 3699. When it feels like the priest is rushing or doesn't care.
- 3700. With the rigid confessors from my childhood
- 3701. When I was about 13 and confessing an endless list of sins, the priest shouted at me to get out of the confessional.
- 3702. I've had a couple of difficult experiences. One was when the priest started talking to me about his own struggles. Another was when the priest was very curt and rushed me through the Confession.
- 3703. Having to confess face-to-face is always difficult. I don't want to feel like I'm in therapy!
- 3704. It's difficult when I do not connect with the priest. Thankfully that's rare.

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3705. A priest refused to hear my confession when I was about 12. He said I didn't belong to the parish anymore, so I should go to my own parish. I think he had been drinking.
3706. The most difficult experiences have been in talking about sins that I'm embarrassed to have committed. Regarding the confessor, it's only difficult when my confession gives the "cookie cutter" treatment.
3707. Feeling laughed at by the priest or like it is a business transaction rather than an encounter with Our Lord.
3708. Only because of my fear and shame, but I'm always glad that I found the courage. Sometimes it feels hurried.
3709. I was asked if I was sure I was done. I was sure there wasn't anything else. I really was. My brain doesn't work as well as it used to, but I had spent time beforehand and 20 minutes in line doing an examination.
3710. When I have felt judged.
3711. One negative experience was when a priest seemed impatient and rushed. He also pointed out that a sin I was confessing was venial and didn't need to be confessed.
3712. The main difficulty is just physical as my body ages.
3713. Sometimes when priests don't say anything at all.
3714. I went to a penance service. There were several priests and one station was face-to-face way too close to our line. We could hear everything the poor older woman was saying.
3715. It was hard confessing something that was against the teachings of the Church that I knew was wrong. The priest was very helpful in bringing me God's grace and forgiveness...and eventually led me to almost forgive myself, too.
3716. The only time I've had a bad experience is when the priest was too rigid and forgot to be tender. I already am disappointed in myself.
3717. Every single time I go. I absolutely hate it. I don't like verbalizing what I've done. I don't like speaking my sins out loud to another human being.
3718. When I hadn't been to confession and had to go back over 30 years. It's hard to remember everything I did and didn't do. I would have appreciated more help, more penance, and greater rejoicing that I came back.
3719. I've had difficult with lines where I felt rushed or felt others could overhear me or the priest.
3720. I find every experience difficult, probably from my Catholic school experience.
3721. Only once when the priest gave me a hard time about going to Confession only every three months. He wanted once a week. I never went back to that priest.
3722. When I've felt yelled at or reprimanded for my sins when that time could have been spent on the conversion of heart from the sin.
3723. When priests have skipped parts of confession, not paying attention, not listening
3724. When priests have not listened to me and have jumped to conclusion based on age or gender.
3725. When I was very young, the priest told me I had to go face-to-face. I was very shy. He scolded me for my written list of sins, which I had done because I tended to get nervous and blank out. It led to a long-standing fear of doing the wrong thing in confession.
3726. I was in a pretty rough patch morally and struggling not totally to throw in the towel. I confessed a number of sins and the priest reacted with something like, "Wow, why

are you going down that path?" It felt accusatory. I already felt deep shame in my choices and lifestyle. It drove me away from even trying to confess for a while, and I have never been back to that priest for confession, in spite of the fact that it is my most convenient option.

3727. I have had priests show what seems like anger in confession when I tell them how long it's been since I've been. I always intend to go more, but usually only go during Lent and Advent, so twice a year. Once, a priest said, "Mother Teresa went every week, and the pope goes every two weeks. Do you think you sin less than them?" Especially because I was only in middle school at the time, this felt horrible to hear, that he thought I placed myself above a saint or the pope because I hadn't been to reconciliation in a while!
3728. A couple of times in my younger days (I am now 66) I had priests who threatened not to give absolution because they said I was not contrite enough. It was scary.
3729. I especially felt uncomfortable as a child, feeling like I was required to make a list of sins and that it was a shame-based practice.
3730. I had a priest who was not nice or compassionate. He put my sins in a cookie-cutter process. He told me to say five Hail Marys and five Our Father's. He rushed through it. He must have had a bad day or was tired. It took me two years before I would go back. I did go back to another priest and had a wonderful experience and now continue to go regularly.
3731. I have had a hard time going to Confession when I don't like the priest, usually when I think that they are old, conservative, judgmental windbags and especially chauvinists. How am I supposed to confess to a person that I neither like nor respect?
3732. In college I felt pressure to go to confession face-to-face. This pressure came not from the priests, but from the culture of my parish. It made it more difficult.
3733. I've had confessors who have been very casual, laid-back, and disinterested when I come seeking penance, guidance, and the Sacrament.
3734. The priest was visually angry, and things did not go well. My sin was living with my partner without being married.
3735. I had a priest yell at me to speak louder and then went on to react with shock after I confessed some mortal sins (sexual ones, not murder). It kept me from the Church for a year because I was so scared to go to confession again. Another priest told me I was going to hell.
3736. When it has been too fast, too rote, and an assembly line experience.
3737. Nothing too difficult has happened, but sometimes the time in confession seems rushed or, in penance services, a little factory-like in running people through for absolution, rather than a real moment of grace.
3738. Mostly the lack of convenient hours for working people.
3739. As a woman, the difficulty is discussing things that men will never have experienced.
3740. Yes. Pride often keeps me away.
3741. My difficulty has been arrogant priests who believe they must act as inquisitor rather than as listener.
3742. I have had difficulty with priests who insist on using Latin for the formula for absolution, which scares my small children who have no idea what the priest is saying.
3743. With a confessor who was impatient and not welcoming

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3744. I am 76 years of age and when I was young and went into the confessional box, I was scared to death. Face-to-face is an excellent solution for me.
3745. Once I mentioned the sin of scrupulosity and a priest told me if he ever heard me mention that again, he wouldn't be so kind the next time.
3746. I confessed to struggling with NFP in my marriage, and a priest made fun of me for struggling with it. He said, "I'm celibate 24/7! What's hard about a few weeks or months of celibacy?" and alluded to my weakness. I already know I'm weak. That's why I was in confession. I wanted to say, "We have different vocations and different lives," but couldn't because I was too ashamed and caught off-guard.
3747. My own shame about my sins.
3748. When the priest gives advice that is way off mark and shows that he wasn't really listening.
3749. When priest told me my problem was I wasn't married. That was of all places at World Youth Day in Australia. I had a horrendous experience going to confession there.
3750. When the priest has gone on a monologue when the line is extremely long.
3751. To have a priest excuse my sins rather than forgive them.
3752. One confessor made me uncomfortable by asking me to sit next to him on a couch rather than across from him. Another asked me if there was alcoholism in my family. Neither left me feeling God's love or mercy.
3753. I had a priest once who tried to convince me that masturbation was not a sin. It was awkward for me to have to be insistent that it was.
3754. I had a confessor who fussed at me for not knowing the Act of Contrition by heart. It was very disheartening. I still get very nervous every time that I'll be scolded again.
3755. I stopped going to confession for a while after the priest interjected his political view when I confessed I voted for a pro-choice presidential candidate, whom I felt had other platforms aligned to my values. His response was I voted for the wrong candidate.
3756. When I've been rushed in and out or felt like priest is distracted. When I've being asked to confess only one big sin and then move on. When my sins have been minimized or "written off" as if, because I'm a busy mom, my sins are no big deal. For example when I confess not making time to spend with our Lord in prayer, a priest has said more than a few times something like, "You're so busy as a mother. That is your prayer."
3757. The difficult is that I'm an introvert, so I don't like trusting and speaking about my inner struggles and sin!
3758. There have been times earlier in my conversion when I was nervous to go in, because I was new to the Church's individual confession system, like lines and such. These times were made more difficult by lack of instructions and guidance on how to participate in the sacrament at a specific church that sometimes resulted in my not going at all.
3759. My guilt and embarrassment.
3760. Sometimes it's difficult to understand the priest.
3761. The priest spoke twenty minutes about himself. I even was afraid that he would not give me time to name any sin.

3762. The priest made jokes about nearly everything I confessed. The whole thing seemed to be a comedy show.
3763. A priest asked questions that were highly personal and not related to the sins I was confessing.
3764. Priests have read the newspaper while I'm confessing or used their phones.
3765. When I've received a generalized response that I know the priest gave everyone that day.
3766. I had an abortion. I have never been able to mention it to a confessor. I am made to believe that for such an act I will be sent to my bishop for absolution.
3767. A substitute priest was hearing confessions in the parking lot due to pandemic. He seemed annoyed to be there, and made me feel I needed to hurry up and get it over with. There were no words of wisdom or advice. He was cold. I felt like I was bothering him. Whenever same priest returns to fill in, I stay away from confession with him. I drive across town instead.
3768. When the priest sounds shocked or affronted by what I say. I will never return to someone who cannot empathize with me.
3769. I am a middle aged married woman living a settled life. I need this sacrament as much as anyone, but the boilerplate examinations of conscience are not at all helpful in realizing one's concrete confessable sins.
3770. One time a priest I worked for broke my seal of confession because he was mad at me and threw a lot of things in my face in front of my core team. To this day I still cannot go face-to-face.
3771. Getting myself to go in the first place, because sin weighs heavily on me.
3772. The priest cut me off and made me feel small.
3773. A visiting priest didn't look at me, kept his chin resting in his hand, every now and again mumbled "uh-huh," closed his eyes, and generally gave the impression that he wished he was somewhere else and that I was boring him. It was not a long confession. I do admit the possibility that he had just had a bad day, but it was difficult all the same.
3774. With ignorant or arrogant clergy.
3775. It's difficult when a priest doesn't give any feed back or help when asked.
3776. I finally went to confession after 20 years away. After I got through the first three sins, the priest shut me down, saying "enough, enough."
3777. One priest was snide and said that it was good that I didn't have kids. I almost said, "What the h\*ll, dude?" but I wanted absolution.
3778. I was yelled at by the priest so loudly that everyone in the church could hear what my faults were. I didn't go to Confession for years after that experience.
3779. Too limited of availability and outdated information on websites.
3780. A priest who was a jerk and gave bad advice.
3781. Priests who preach against whatever is bothering me. I can't wait to get out of there, and clam up immediately.
3782. As a child, pre Vatican II, I was always afraid that I was in mortal sin. They told you that you could go to hell for eating meat on Friday. When I confessed that, I got chewed out, even when it happened accidentally.
3783. It is always difficult talking to older men who have no idea how difficult a woman's life can be.

3784. I have obsessive compulsive disorder and scrupulosity. Unless the priest knows you have it, confession can be brutal.
3785. I had one priest tell me to make up my own act of contrition and not use one of the memorized ones. I said okay, and paused to think of what I'd say. Then he responded, "Hurry up. There are others waiting," and there weren't. It was very disturbing to me.
3786. When confession is routine.
3787. When priests have ignored my sins or acted like they were nothing.
3788. No bad experiences, just some less than satisfying.
3789. Many years ago the confessor yelled at me for not coming to confession more frequently. My practice at the time was every six weeks. He suggested at least once a month. He didn't make it sound inviting.
3790. Last summer I tried to explain to the confessor what I suspected was the root of a sin I confessed. I was not making excuses, but trying to understand why I was falling into this particular temptation. The priest cut me off before I had a chance to explain and ridiculed me for trying to evade culpability, which I wasn't. I'm pretty sure that I won't return there for confession.
3791. I've had confessors who did not adhere to the Catholic faith, who preached sympathy for sin, that it's to have temptations and give into them. These are essentially activist confessors who do not trust in the Truth of the Church teachings..
3792. I was once denied absolution because I wanted to talk about sins I had committed in my marriage, ways I had failed to be a good wife, without denouncing my marriage itself as a sin. The priest wasn't having it.
3793. Confession is always emotionally difficult and raw.
3794. The confessor told me, "Hurry, I'm going to dinner."
3795. I was asked out by a confessor.
3796. It's been difficult when the priest would not allow me to share my struggle, or when he was too rigid.
3797. I do not always know what to say.
3798. The only serious difficulty has been on my side. I hate admitting that I've not been the person I should have been. It's left-over perfectionism, but unfortunately it still runs deep.
3799. Sure I've had bad experiences, mostly when the priest gets judgmental. Once I had been away from the sacrament for a while. When I said, "It has been 6 months since my last confession, he replied, in horror and shock, "Six months?" I'm old enough now to shake that off and be persistent in seeking God's mercy. But it bothers me when I hear those stories from my adult kids. My daughter has not gone to confession in years. My son has left the church entirely.
3800. When I've experienced misunderstanding and lack of discussion about what I've confessed. Some priests just listen in a hurry and avoid discussing anything.
3801. Most have been difficult. I struggle with questions about faith and the Church and do not have easily confessable sins. Most deal with my interactions and thoughts about others, and often it is only on reflection about what I have done that day or week that I realize I have sinned.
3802. A church in my diocese had a list of sins posted in the confessional and aligned them with their different "punishments." For example, X sin will lead to excommunication.

All that does is lead to people not confessing such sins and being unable to seek healing and guidance.

3803. An older priest asking improper questions about sexual activity when I was a young girl.
3804. On my end, when confessing shameful sins.
3805. They are almost all difficult. I'm not comfortable talking to a man. I feel like I'm exposing my soul to complete stranger. I hate it.
3806. Most of my difficult experiences were years ago in the 70-80s when a priest seemed uninterested and aloof.
3807. When the priest had an uncaring tone.
3808. A priest directed me to come out from behind the confession curtain. I told him no, I would not. He was irritated.
3809. I had a bad experience as a college student where I was scolded. It kept me away from the sacrament for more than 20 years.
3810. When the priest did not listen as I thought he should.
3811. Constantly being referred to as a sinner and not as a child of God.
3812. Hearing the priest shout at my sister who went before me, "That's not a sin!" for all the church to hear. It made it really hard to go next!
3813. I think rushed confessions (long line, only 30 minutes for the whole parish) are difficult. They become less human; rather just spilling your guts and then leaving. I find penances that require actions spread out over a week after confessing to be too demanding; they don't allow the healing to truly begin; it becomes more about getting it done than soaking in God's healing touch.
3814. Hearing sighs from the confessor and being told quite pointedly what commandment I had broken. I don't know to this day if he thought I didn't express enough contrition for it.
3815. When I don't feel listened to.
3816. The examination of conscience is always difficult. It's hard to identify and acknowledge sins.
3817. During the 1970s, priests assumed any penitent was scrupulous. I doubt my cause for beatification is going to be opened any time soon, yet, though I only go to Confession a few times a year, for about 7 years I inevitably heard, "Nothing you're telling me is a sin." I struggled, later, because my nervous disorder made me fear going to Church and I would miss Mass. At best, the response would be, "But it's your obligation!"
3818. With priests who are there not to listen and be the understanding presence of God, but to judge and make you feel bad.
3819. Not difficult experiences, but I often feel the priest just wants to get it over with and move on, like we are just going through the motions.
3820. Yes. I would group them in two buckets. The first are assembly line confessions, focused on the mechanics of the sacrament rather than its spiritual meaning. The second are judgment/punishment confessions, focused more on the judgment of actions rather than on conscience formation.
3821. Too many experiences with cold, unfeeling priests.
3822. First, just getting up the courage to go. Next, feeling the pressure of others waiting and the need to hurry. Finally, being in position where I really needed to go but circumstances made it difficult to find a time and place that would work.

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3823. In another state, the priest did not know me and I think there was some misunderstanding. He was harsh and accusatory. It was very upsetting. My pastor told me the priest may have been having a bad day.
3824. I have had several instances where the priest gave a semi-homily and perhaps misunderstood what I was confessing.
3825. A long time ago I would get very emotional in confession. The priest reprimanded me and made me not want to return.
3826. My sins are so heinous and embarrassing that it is difficult to speak them out loud.
3827. I told the priest my husband hit me and the children. He said, "Well just don't make him angry and he won't hit you."
3828. The most difficult times are when I know the priest and he knows me, which makes it harder for me to realize that I am really talking to Jesus.
3829. Sometimes a sin is embarrassing and I have to summon courage to confess it to a priest.
3830. My inability to express myself correctly.
3831. The confessor asked me where so-and-so was. I thought I was anonymous. Then I realized he knew me. I never forgot this.
3832. I had two. Each time the priest gently hollered at me and told me to do better. A lecture in the confessional is not helpful.
3833. My daughter is a practicing Catholic, but hadn't been to confession for a couple years. When she finally went, she was told she was a bad person. I don't think she has been back since.
3834. The priest yelled at me so loud everyone could hear!
3835. The only difficulty is my embarrassment in confessing. When we do a communal penance service with priests seated in different locations about the church, it can be hard to try to whisper to an older priest when all are openly seated with lines formed to confess. I try to go to the one in a room with a door.
3836. I've had many times where I've shed tears that I wished I had rather not, but sometimes that comes with repentance and had nothing to do with the confessor.

**Do you choose a consistent confessor  
most of the time or do you go  
to whoever is hearing confessions?  
Is there a reason behind your choice?**

3837. Possibly a different priest to my regular priest because you don't want him thinking of your sins when he is meeting you.
3838. I choose experienced confessors who are able to appreciate my repentance and God's mercy. Especially when I am trying to root out a sin that I've confessed a lot without healing, I try to go to one particular confessor during that time.
3839. I go to anyone I can, seeking reconciliation the graces of reconciliation.
3840. Yes, I choose a consistent confessor. He's eloquent and I feel that the penance he gives is meaningful.
3841. It depends upon availability. One is preferable. I look for the priest who best stands in the place of Jesus.
3842. I usually go to the same priest.
3843. I choose a confessor who I know well and can relate to on personal and spiritual basis.
3844. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I go to a church where I'm sure I will be treated with respect and compassion.
3845. I go to different confessors. It's supposed to be God we are talking to, after all.
3846. Both. I have a dear priest friend of 20 years and sometimes will go to him. Sometimes I stay in my parish and choose whom I feel more comfortable confessing to. It is usually the one I believe will listen with kindness and understanding about life married with children.
3847. Both. I typically (outside of the pandemic) have a regular confessor, but will "stop in" if I am near a shrine or if I have a more serious sin for and cannot wait for my regular confessor.
3848. I always try to go the same priest because he makes the whole experience feel holy.
3849. I go to the same confessor because he is kind, compassionate and a good listener.
3850. A Jesuit said on a retreat, "It could be psychological suicide for a gay catholic to go to confession without knowing the confessor's attitude to gay people."
3851. I have had a close relationship with two Norbertine Priests to whom I went from 2010-2020. Beginning in 2021 I have started going to a diocesan Priest. I prefer being in an open trusting relationship with the confessor.
3852. I would want someone that I do not know well.
3853. I've always lived where you take what you get and where parishioners are told you're just lucky you have a priest at all because of perceived or real shortages.
3854. I choose to go to a consistent confessor. He knows the backstory of my life.
3855. I prefer a priest that I do not know, but I go to whoever is available.
3856. I generally choose to go to one of several priests whom I am confident will be attentive, helpful, and kind.
3857. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.

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3858. I go to my parish priest, but that's because it's right before Mass on Saturday.
3859. I go according to convenience.
3860. I'm from a small parish and there is no option. We have only one priest.
3861. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. There are no other options.
3862. When possible, I like to go consistently to the same one.
3863. Where I currently reside, we only have one priest. I'd have to drive an hour to have a different priest.
3864. I go to a parish that is not mine where multiple priests offer confession at the same time, and I take whoever is available. I do this because I work for my own parish.
3865. We have one priest and he is great but sometimes I want to go elsewhere due to my priest's knowing my voice
3866. I choose a variety but typically those who give charitable, pastoral homilies. I would not go to one who preaches lots of hellfire and damnation.
3867. I go to my parish priest.
3868. I will go to anybody for Confession. I always look for Jesus during Confession.
3869. I go to whoever is hearing. I often don't have a choice.
3870. I go to the church where I had my first confession. I'm more comfortable and know where to go.
3871. I do not have a consistent confessor. I go to confession primarily based on available times as they relate to my work and family schedule. Ideally, I would like a regular confessor. I wish more churches, or at least the ones with multiple priests, would offer confession right before Mass.
3872. I have a regular confessor, whoever is the pastor of my parish.
3873. I prefer anonymity and so go to different priests.
3874. Whenever I find a good confessor – which is rare – I always go to him.
3875. I always go where there is a confessional. I'm not looking for a counseling session, I'm looking for God's forgiveness
3876. I'm a pastoral minister and counselor and so don't like to confess with people I have to work with. I tend to look for confessors when I'm on vacation. I also have a retired priest friend who has been helpful.
3877. I regularly go to the Jesuits, whoever is hearing.
3878. We only have one priest so it's not really an option.
3879. Truthfully I very rarely go to confession anymore, but when I do, I look for a priest who does not know me. I'm just more comfortable with someone I don't know.
3880. I choose a regular confessor because he knows me, knows my circumstances, and knows the things I struggle with. I believe this helps me actually deal with the reason that led me to sin in the first place
3881. I choose based upon my schedule and the availability of the sacrament. I would like to choose based upon confessor, but the typical 30 minute window for an entire parish makes this difficult!
3882. I go to whoever is available at the reconciliation service. Usually, I pick the shortest line.
3883. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I do avoid having someone know who I truly am.
3884. I'd like to have a consistent confessor. I do much better when the priest knows and understands me. But it's not always the case that I find one.

3885. I shop around. I work for the church and don't go to priest with whom I work. I also think it helps me to know the Lord is there if I go to different priests, as the Lord is the constant.
3886. I'd like to be consistent because I feel it helps build relationships. This is not always possible, however, so I will see any confessor available.
3887. I'm not comfortable going back every time to my parish priest because I don't trust that he won't think less of me for struggling with the same thing all the time. I went to a stranger when it was a more serious matter years ago.
3888. I have chosen a regular confessor. But he has now left my area. I have been to several other priests but felt they didn't really listen to me.
3889. I choose a consistent confessor. It helps me grow in my spiritual life to speak with someone who knows me and can sometime point out unhelpful patterns. I feel less anxious with someone I know.
3890. I go to whoever is available, but with priests with whom I am comfortable.
3891. I choose to go to someone who doesn't know me.
3892. I learned from a fellow parishioner that she goes to a nearby parish that offers lots of Confession times and she doesn't worry about meeting with priests she knows. I have sometimes gone to that parish, too, but I normally have gone to my own parish.
3893. I go to whoever is available.
3894. I go to Mass when they have multiple priests available and try to find someone who doesn't know me
3895. About a year and a half ago now, my confessor of three years who had helped me immeasurably and was a former therapist was moved by the Bishop. He did not want me to continue to come to him at a new parish several hours away and asked me to go to the new priest. I tried, at least five times. It was awful each time. He was young, vacant, looked down, etc. I finally felt like I was being "disobedient" when I went back to my former Confessor. I do not understand why we can't have the same Confessor for long periods. Someone like me deeply needs this. I cry as I write.
3896. I prefer a different each time
3897. I go to whoever is present to hear confessions.
3898. I go to whoever is available. I prefer anonymity.
3899. Typically I go to whoever is available, for the sake of convenience. During difficult times, however, I will seek out trusted priests who can listen, counsel, comfort and celebrate the Sacrament with me.
3900. I go to whoever is available.
3901. I go to whomever, because no matter whom I go to I'm speaking to God and I believe He will guide me to the confessor I most need.
3902. I go to anyone that I don't know who is available.
3903. I always go to someone different.
3904. It depends on what my situation is: has it been too long or am in a place where it is a routine?
3905. I go to my spiritual director who has known me and my journey for years.
3906. I don't go to confession often, so I just haven't had the chance to have a consistent confessor.
3907. I go to whoever is hearing confession if it's on days where my parish is scheduled to hear confessions. If I make an appointment, it's with my spiritual advisor. But I don't

have much preference because the priests assigned to my parish are all superlative priests.

3908. I go to whoever is hearing.
3909. At this point in my life I only go to confession when I'm comfortable with the priest.
3910. I usually go to a penance service once or twice a year where they have multiple priests, so it's more like a fast food drive through.
3911. I wish I had a regular confessor. I go to whoever is hearing confessions because of scheduling.
3912. I generally go to a different parish. My own pastor is hard for me to understand and I'm not very comfortable in my parish reconciliation room, as I know people can hear outside the door.
3913. I go to whoever is hearing. I used to mind going to a priest who knew me when I was younger, but not so much anymore.
3914. I go to whoever is hearing confession. I usually only go twice a year.
3915. I choose a consistent confessor who is a retired priest and has a gentle, kind demeanor.
3916. I go mainly based on my schedule, to whoever is hearing
3917. I prefer a consistent confessor
3918. I go to whoever is available
3919. I go to whoever is hearing, but do not go frequently
3920. It depends where I am. If I'm staying in place for one time, I tend to go to one particular priest whom I don't know personally but whose method of administering the sacrament I like. Otherwise I just go to whoever is available. I prefer those who have a screen in the confessional and don't draw out the advice section too long.
3921. When I was in religious life, I liked having a spiritual director. Now, as a married woman, I will go to anyone I don't know, because I practice birth control.
3922. There are two confessors I prefer.
3923. Years ago, I always sought out a consistent confessor. It was difficult when he was re-assigned.
3924. I would like to choose a consistent confessor, but that doesn't always work out for me. I do find that I have three to four priests that I would rather go to for Confession. I never feel comfortable going to my home parish, because I feel too vulnerable to make a good confession.
3925. I don't go as often as I would like. When I do go, it is whoever is hearing that day.
3926. I prefer a constant Confessor, because I feel it helps me more determined to repent of habitual sin. However, I tend to go to whichever priest who is available. I'm grateful for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and I appreciate any Priest who is willing to hear my confession.
3927. I would rather go to a random priest. I fear that if I go to my own parish pastor he may judge me later in our Church community.
3928. I do not have a preference.
3929. I have several confessors to whom I go.
3930. I usually choose a consistent confessor. I know which priest will be understanding and provide good counsel.
3931. I go to whoever is available.

3932. I go to whomever according to convenience. I am still embarrassed at times, so I like when I have the chance to go to a different priest.
3933. I go to a consistent place but not a consistent priest. They have more than one priest, so I go to whoever is there.
3934. I go consistently to a priest who knows how to listen, give advice and pray with me.
3935. I go to communal penance services.
3936. I try to stick to a couple of different priests, but sometimes out of pride I will go to someone else.
3937. I'm mostly impartial, as I speak as I would if Jesus was truly there. But my most "enjoyable" or meaningful confessions have been with priests I didn't know and I have never seen since, like at a retreat or a penance service. They seemed to be more in touch and shared wise words of encouragement.
3938. I go to a priest who doesn't know me. Because I'm at a one-priest-parish, that means I go to another parish.
3939. I go to whoever is available
3940. I am involved in my parish and, though he has not said anything, the priest administrator is not comfortable hearing my confession, so I try to go to a different church. Sometimes it is inconvenient that I have to go to a priest to whom I would rather not.
3941. I go to one confessor now.
3942. I do not feel comfortable going to Confession face to face with a priest who knows me. Sometimes I will go to a different parish to avoid having to go to a confessor who I know.
3943. I have had the same confessor for the past dozen years.
3944. I try to go to the same priest all the time because he listens with a loving heart and a desire to heal.
3945. I try to be consistent with whom I go to, for consistency of direction, but it isn't always possible.
3946. I try to go to the same Confessor, so he can learn about me and me about him, so he can challenge me and help me grow. Sometimes I have to go to whoever is available. It's hard, however, to get in during the one hour once a week, and appointments aren't always easy to get.
3947. I usually plan my confession and have driven 30 minutes to see the same priest. I seem to change confessors every 5 or 6 years.
3948. I move every 2-3 years on average, and so have not had the same confessor more than a few times. If I don't feel comfortable with my pastor, I will go to someone else.
3949. It is almost impossible to get regular confession in my parish. The priests are rarely available, and the scant times offered are always packed. So I have to go elsewhere.
3950. I am a bit hesitant about going to my parish priest, so I do not have a consistent confessor.
3951. I have no preference. I go mostly to who is available.
3952. My confessor is always my parish priest. He knows me well enough to both hear what I am saying and notice when I may be on the edge of saying something more. He knows my strengths, weaknesses, and my faith journey. Probably most important for me is that I know him well enough to truly respect him. I feel safe with him. He is

mature, wise, and demonstrates his faith and love in how he lives and how he leads the parish.

3953. I usually go to the shortest line.
3954. I go to whoever is hearing.
3955. I go to whoever is available.
3956. I always chose my pastor because he is a wonderful confessor. He just retired and I haven't yet been to confession without him.
3957. I go to whoever is hearing confessions
3958. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, usually based on time and availability.
3959. We live in a small town and therefore we go to confession at our church. Even so, when we travel we take advantage of confession at churches we attend, or in a diocese that we may be fond of.
3960. If I could, I would choose, but either option is good.
3961. I go to whoever is hearing. I like different perspectives.
3962. I'm open to going to whoever is available whenever I go.
3963. I go consistently to confession at a church near my job because it is convenient, but I don't look for a specific confessor. I usually do private, not face to face, because I am embarrassed
3964. I mostly go to whoever is there, but that is just because of my pace of life. I can't plan around who might be hearing confessions.
3965. I would love to have a consistent confessor but I usually go to whoever is available when I am.
3966. I go to whoever is there, to just get it done.
3967. I normally go to confession during weekend times that are most convenient for me to get to. I don't seek out a specific confessor, but my confessors are often priests that I don't know personally.
3968. I prefer a particular confessor, but sometimes it isn't possible, so I'm ok with another confessor.
3969. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I sometimes go to different churches especially if they force me to go face-to-face. It's about anonymity for me.
3970. At this point in my life (over 60 years of age), I prefer to confess to our pastor, who I consider to be the most reliable in being faithful to the truth of the faith and not just to water down what I may be doing wrong.
3971. I go to whoever. No reason.
3972. I tend to go to whoever is hearing confessions. My schedule is erratic and I'm more interested in time availability.
3973. Before COVID I had a spiritual director and went to him regularly. Now I go to any priest who is hearing. I'm not given a choice among those hearing. It's been OK.
3974. Right now confession is hard to find. I go wherever I can find a priest. I had to leave Houston to find an Eastern Orthodox priest in Georgia.
3975. There is no choice. I go to whoever "shows up."
3976. There are several parishes close by that I go to. I do not want to go to the two priests at my parish. They said they do not know the absolution prayer! Why can't they bring a copy with them?
3977. I leave it up to God to speak through his vessels what I need to hear. I avoid a priest who did not use the formula of absolution and was therefore simulating the

Sacrament. I had to ask him specifically to absolve me with the formula or it would not be valid, and he told me he did not think he had the power to say the words of absolution. He said, "Your sins are forgiven" instead of "I absolve you." I had to give him correction and he later expressed gratitude to me for helping him do the right thing.

3978. I go to a priest who knows me and is willing to spend time with me to listen.
3979. I go to many different churches and priests. Unfortunately I avoid priests I know because I'm embarrassed to tell them my sins because I'm afraid of what they'll think of me.
3980. I try to choose a consistent confessor due to familiarity. It's usually someone I feel comfort with.
3981. I just go to whoever is hearing confessions at my parish.
3982. I will go to whoever is hearing. I feel as though I am talking through the priest to God, just as the absolution comes through him from God.
3983. When I was younger (20s,) I used to go to a neighboring parish but now (30s) I simply go to my pastor. I was initially worried about confessing to the same priest I'd see at Mass because that can create a vulnerable feeling, but as I've gotten older and become more comfortable with the sacrament itself, it's become a non-issue.
3984. I try to go to the same confessor.
3985. Sometimes I gravitate toward a priest whose spirituality resonates with me but most of the time I rely on the Holy Spirit to guide the confessor and me.
3986. I choose to go to a priest who does not know me at all.
3987. I have found a new regular confessor and he and I are getting to know each other. Time will tell, but I know that God forgives and will help me find the right person.
3988. I go to a regular confessor, someone I know who will treat this act with the hope it brings, not as a punitive activity.
3989. I find confession difficult and only go to visiting priests.
3990. Convenience is huge. I have never been to an intolerant confessor.
3991. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I prefer not to know the priest, but that is not always possible.
3992. I go to whoever is in the confessional. I just moved and had one of the best experiences of my life with a priest I'd never met before.
3993. I go to the same confessor, because I feel most comfortable with him.
3994. I prefer to go to the same one. He usually gives some spiritual direction as well and I feel like the consistency keeps me more accountable.
3995. I go to the person I feel most comfortable with, whom I respect outside of the confessional.
3996. I try for the same priest, but will take anyone in the Confessional.
3997. I go to whoever is hearing confession. I try to go face to face.
3998. I go to whoever is available.
3999. At one time I had a regular confessor. He moved away. Now when I confess I usually go to whoever's is hearing confessions.
4000. I have gone to Confession to priests who knew me personally. I have felt that their counsel was more meaningful.
4001. I usually go to a monastery where they offer confessions 6 days a week from 9:30 - 4:00.

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4002. It depends. Sometimes I've sought a specific confessor who has routinely communicated with me in a particularly powerful way. Sometimes I just go to whoever is there. Even when I seek a particular confessor, I am aware that it's not the person I'm seeking, it's the forgiveness.
4003. I just go to my local priest, but it does not matter either way. The sacrament is the sacrament.
4004. I go to whoever is there. I don't have a regular confessor.
4005. I rarely go to confession, but when I do it's typically during a retreat when I've had time to really reflect. In those circumstances, I go to whoever is available.
4006. I go to whoever I draw.
4007. I mostly go to whoever is hearing confessions. Sometimes I feel embarrassed to go to a priest I know if I am really ashamed of my sins.
4008. I would like consistency, but most of the time I just go to whoever is offering at the time that's convenient.
4009. I prefer to go where I am not known.
4010. I always go somewhere they don't know me. My mother was heavily involved in the parish when I was growing up and even though I truly believed in confidentiality of the process, it was too difficult for me to have her close friend as a confessor.
4011. I go to the same priest.
4012. I go to a different parish for confession, because I am a staff member at my parish and my pastor is my boss.
4013. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4014. I go to an anonymous priest. I feel more comfortable.
4015. I go to the same confessor because of the location
4016. I go to my Parish priest but when I need confession more often and he isn't available, I go to who is.
4017. To go to whoever is available, for no particular reason. The outcome is the same.
4018. If I go, it is to a priest I know to be intelligent, wise, and patient.
4019. It depends. My regular confessor got moved to a parish that is an hour away. So I usually just go to whoever will hear it.
4020. I try to go to someone who I don't know.
4021. I've never made a specific choice, but know others who have for reasons of confidentiality.
4022. I used to have a consistent confessor, but he died. I need to find another. I am a director in a diocesan office, so I'm not comfortable confessing to someone I need to have credibility with. I try to find a retired priest and stick with him until he dies. Sometimes I go when I'm out of town visiting family.
4023. There is only one church in my fairly large city where confession is offered every day. There are two priests there. Both are wonderful.
4024. I go to whoever is convenient. I prefer to go to a priest who doesn't know me.
4025. I prefer to go anonymously to someone who doesn't know me.
4026. I go to who is there and try for the one who seems to care and understand.
4027. I go to whoever is available at the time but I always go to a Basilica that hears lots of confessions instead of my local parish. I prefer to go to a confessor who sees more "traffic."

4028. I usually go to the same confessor, but sometimes I go to different priests occasionally, just to hear different responses.
4029. I would love a consistent confessor but where I live now, the pickings are slim. Also, I think I would feel awkward if it was a priest I knew as a parishioner.
4030. I go to any priest.
4031. There are priests I prefer because of their intelligence and sensitivity. I've had mixed results from going to just anyone. Sometimes they're wonderful, sometimes awful.
4032. I go in general to any priest, but I would not go to priest with bad reputation.
4033. I had a regular confessor before the pandemic. Now I avoid my pastor and seek reconciliation at another parish with more convenient times.
4034. When I'm at home, I have a consistent Confessor but I will go while traveling as well.
4035. My pastor should be on the path to canonization. He's a great priest. I go to him for the big stuff but to others as well. I admit that the pastor is also my good friend and I am sometimes embarrassed to confess to him. I know this is contrary to how we understand this sacrament.
4036. I go when and where I can.
4037. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I prefer anonymous.
4038. We only have one priest at my church, so I go to him unless I am someplace else where confession is available
4039. I go to different priests. I try to leave it to the Holy Spirit
4040. I go to whoever is hearing confessions and avoid my pastor. I like him a lot but I am involved in the church so am not comfortable with his knowing everything, depending on the sin.
4041. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4042. I would go to who ever available. Different viewpoints are always good.
4043. Our parish has only one priest so I usually have him hear my confession. He is my earthly shepherd and so there is a sense of belonging here. On occasion I go to another priest but it is just because I'm away from home or our pastor is out of town.
4044. When I was younger I would make an appointment with a particular priest. Now I just go to whoever is available because it just works better with my lifestyle now.
4045. I go to whoever is available. I would like to find someone I would like to go to on a regular basis.
4046. I prefer the same confessor, but my pastor retired. It is easier to just go now when I can. Since there are so few priests, I usually go to the same person.
4047. I to go whomever I get. I travel a lot. Sometimes I feel a bit ashamed of going to the same priest after confessing specific sins.
4048. I don't go to the same priest each time. It's too difficult.
4049. I have different confessors.
4050. Well I normally go to my parish Priest, but when I need to go to someone else, I am not picky.
4051. I do not have a consistent confessor, other than to avoid priests who are difficult to relate to outside of confession.
4052. I consistently seek out our parish associate pastor, not the pastor. I am a senior advisor and key volunteer to the pastor on a major expansion of our physical facilities. I feel that, if he knew my weaknesses, it would complicate our relationship and he might view my advice and actions differently.

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4053. I go to whoever is hearing. I know God will work through whomever I go to.
4054. I prefer one who knows me, so he understands my basic life story.
4055. I go to whoever is there. All are caring.
4056. I try to have a regular confessor once I find a good one. But they get moved, so I don't currently have a regular confessor.
4057. I go to whomever is available generally. There are many priests at the place I go, which is not my parish, but I know they are more understanding.
4058. I choose a priest not from my parish.
4059. Since my return to confession two years ago, I have always had the same confessor.
4060. I've tried both over the years. Now I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4061. I go to our parish priest. I think having a consistent confessor helps.
4062. I would never just go to whoever is hearing confessions! I think that's just nuts. I don't go regularly anymore at all, but if I did, I would either choose a consistent confessor (if there were one around me in my rural area) or have a couple that I would consider. These days, I think my occasional participation in this sacrament while on a retreat is working fine.
4063. I love going to confession when I am far from home! There's a new perspective and I feel more open. I love going to the National Shrine in DC. The priests there take their time, suggest Scripture and one priest has a file and prays as he searches for the right prayer or Scripture he believes will help the penitent. He cares!
4064. I prefer going to a priest I don't know, to avoid awkwardness.
4065. I visit another parish sometimes because I feel so uncomfortable confessing to some of the priests at my parish. They instill anguish in me with their stern looks and lack of kindness. Other priests display warmth and kindness even when I am nervous or stumble to find the right words.
4066. I would love a constant confessor, but my current work/life schedule does not allow for it. I usually pop into whichever church has a time conducive to my work schedule.
4067. I go to whoever is hearing.
4068. I prefer to go to someone I don't know.
4069. I go to whoever, for convenience. If I were battling some major habit of sin, then I think a consistent confessor would be good.
4070. I purposely try to go to someone who doesn't know me, an entirely different parish if possible!
4071. If I know the priest, I would choose the familiar listener.
4072. I go to whoever is available.
4073. I generally go to wherever is hearing confessions at the time convenient for me. I specifically avoid going to my own parish, because I don't really want my confessor to know me. I know which I know I should be fine with this, but I'm not.
4074. I usually choose based on location, not the priest.
4075. I go to whoever is available, because of convenience.
4076. There is a priest in the area I would avoid, but for the most part I have been fine with any good priest.
4077. It has been consistent as of late, but usually I go by whoever is hearing confessions.
4078. I go to who is there when I go.

4079. I go to a consistent confessor. A priest who rushes confession made me not want to go to him again. I also have a bit of scrupulosity from time to time; my usual confessor knows that and is able to steer me in the right direction.
4080. We have only one priest and so I have no choice but a regular confessor.
4081. I go to all different priests. I feel different priests will help in different ways. Each has his own strengths, insights.
4082. I avoid priests I know.
4083. I only go to priests I know well. I will not deliberately expose myself to harsh judgment or narrow-mindedness.
4084. I go to different confessors, but I won't go back to anyone who is annoying.
4085. I have not found a confessor I wanted to go to more than once.
4086. I choose the priests who I know will give me grace and peace.
4087. I go to whoever is hearing due to the same priest's rarely being available. We are in an underserved area.
4088. I consistent go to a priest who understands me.
4089. I go to whoever is hearing, but never to a priest who knows me
4090. When I was in religious life I sought a regular confessor. I felt that it held me spiritually accountable and became a fertile ground for continued guidance in my spiritual growth.
4091. I am happy to go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4092. I go to whoever is hearing as it is easier.
4093. I go on my annual retreat. That's the most consistent time.
4094. I go to pretty much whoever is hearing confessions.
4095. I go to a consistent confessor knows me and my inclinations and hence shares the truth about me, like my blind spots. Since he knows me, he can bring these up more easily.
4096. It depends on the situation. I know a lot of priests, so sometimes I go to a friend, but I also don't mind going to a stranger. I am wary of going to priests critical of Pope Francis, as some seem dismissive of the idea of mercy and make a point of principle to emphasize dogmatic firmness over mercy and understanding.
4097. It's good to have a spiritual director but I go to whoever is available. Most priests, if they are dedicated, are very busy.
4098. I choose the parish carefully, but am more open to going to priests in a parish I trust.
4099. I try to choose the same confessor. Sadly, as priests age without younger men stepping in, it is becoming more difficult.
4100. For the most part, yes, I go to the same confessor. Sometimes I'll go to a different priest to gain a different perspective.
4101. If a confessor I like to see is available I go to him; if not I go to whoever is available.
4102. I only choose confessors who believe (as I do) that the Catechism is an unsuitable tool for the confessional.
4103. I usually go to my parish or local shrine, just because the times are convenient.
4104. It depends. Normally I go when there are convenient times, but if there's something particular I need to discuss, I make appointments with priests I trust.
4105. I go to my priest spiritual director so he can help me overcome the obstacles of my human nature, since he really knows me.
4106. I usually go to the same confessor.

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4107. We don't have a ton of options in the American South thanks to a shrinking of the Faith but fortunately I can email my pastor if I want a longer confession.
4108. If possible I prefer a priest who I am familiar with.
4109. I just go to whoever is available.
4110. I try to go to someone anonymously.
4111. I go to whoever is hearing them at the time. The reason is convenience.
4112. I try for consistency
4113. I mostly go to the same priest.
4114. It depends on the circumstances. In my home parish I choose the priest who knows how to smile because he has a warmth about him that is gentle and kind.
4115. Since I work for the Church, I know most priests and feel comfortable with any of them.
4116. I usually go to a consistent confessor but if I feel terrible about a sin, I find a different priest
4117. I normally go to parish priests. During Christmas and Easter Season, I will go to any of the priests hearing confessions, if the line with the parish priest is long.
4118. I prefer a consistent confessor, yet the priests where I attend mass don't know me personally. So, I opt to go to different confessors.
4119. I tend to go to the same person, but there were times when I would take advantage of any church I was visiting. I tend to go to the same person because there is a mutual relationship and time for conversation.
4120. I go to a penance service.
4121. Since I moved to the States, I've yet to find a regular confessor. I don't like going to my parish priest and my accent makes me pretty recognizable, so I can't be anonymous.
4122. I go to all our priests.
4123. It varies depending on the experience I have with particular priests.
4124. I used to have a consistent confessor as a teenager but I have not been able to get myself to go consistently in my adult life.
4125. I try for the same confessor, but am open to a fresh view.
4126. I usually go to our pastor, the only priest at our church. I sometimes go to others at special events or places.
4127. I am 83 years old. Over the years I've tried both consistency and variety. Both have good reasons. A confessor at a conference was very good, but lives too far away to go again to him.
4128. I only go to order priests whom I know in my parish or at retreat houses.
4129. We only have one priest so there is no choice.
4130. Despite my attempts to seek a regular confessor, it is difficult to find one who is competent or available to be a spiritual director.
4131. Generally speaking I have had only one choice.
4132. I go to random priests who don't know me because I don't want the baggage of my pastor or parochial vicar knowing all my business.
4133. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. There is no priest I totally trust after a bad experience.
4134. I try to go to my pastor. But we live near a Marian Shrine and have wonderful priests who hear confessions.

4135. I go to a consistent confessor. He explained confession and made me feel so much more about the blessing of the Sacrament.
4136. If I am having a serious concern, I try to choose. But I often travel and just find a church.
4137. For ten years, I had one confessor who knew me well. After his death, I have tried to find another consistent confessor without success.
4138. I go usually to whoever is available.
4139. I'd rather go to a priest I don't know.
4140. I go to a consistent confessor.
4141. I prefer face to face confession with someone who doesn't know me
4142. I go to the same one.
4143. I have a couple who I confess to.
4144. I generally go to the same priest, so he can get to know me and can advise if he sees patterns. If I have an embarrassing sin, though, I go to a priest I don't know.
4145. I typically go to the same one. Although a priest says he doesn't remember, he knows me.
4146. I choose priests I don't know and will never see again.
4147. I used to have the same priest, but one died, another left the priesthood and got married, a third was moved across the diocese. They were kind, good listeners, who never made me feel ashamed and gave solid guidance.
4148. I have been trying to go to same priest. He is patient, kind and understanding.
4149. I usually go to different ones until I find a good confessor and then go mostly to him.
4150. I have done both at different times in my life. I think when you are making bigger life choices, it is good to have a consistent confessor. Once you are kind of a grown up, whoever is there will do.
4151. I do not usually go at my own parish. I worked for a long time in lay ministry and at the parish office, so I don't want to go to my supervisor or colleague. I did once purposely choose a priest I worked with because he understood the situation and the people involved and that was necessary for perspective, but ordinarily that's not what I'm looking for.
4152. I usually go to our pastor.
4153. I go to whoever is convenient.
4154. I go to my personal confessor, consistently, because he is pastoral and oriented to the atonement of reconciliation.
4155. Our priests change so often it's hard to see one consistently. If I could continue to see Father Brian, I would.
4156. I am looking for a consistent confessor, but unfortunately there are very few priests who I've had good experiences with and whose theology aligns with mine, so there are slim pickings to choose from. I find myself not going very often as a result.
4157. I have a consistent confessor.
4158. I go usually to whoever is there that day.
4159. I go once or twice a year and do not have a regular confessor.
4160. I try to go to a consistent one because he is familiar with my struggles, but will go to someone else if the line is long.
4161. I go to whoever because I am looking for someone to connect with.

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4162. I work for the church. If I feel comfortable with my pastor, I will go to him. When I attend a communal reconciliation service, I'll go to the shortest line.
4163. I like to go to different priests, different parishes.
4164. I go to different priests.
4165. I've gone to many different priests and appreciate diversity so I can walk away enhanced to be a better person. I find variety of choice has given me new perspectives and different experiences.
4166. I go to whomever is available when I am able to go.
4167. It depends. If I don't have a trusting relationship, then I will absolutely go to a different parish and confess to someone I don't know.
4168. I like to have a consistent confessor. The first time I confessed to one particular priest, he told me he knew my deceased son. My son passed away from leukemia when he was in second grade. The priest had been in seventh grade and he said he used to talk with him on the playground. It was at a Christmas Communal Penance service. It was the best Christmas Gift I received that year: this priest I had never met remembering my son. He's been my confessor most of the time since that evening.
4169. I go to different priests.
4170. I tend to either go to a complete stranger priest or one I trust. I have had times when I felt Confession was a waste of time and then found another priest I trusted to redo the Confession!
4171. I choose total anonymity
4172. I go before or after Mass, to whoever is hearing confessions at the time.
4173. I used to go to the pastor of my church once a month. He was older, compassionate, and offered concrete suggestions. Even though I was behind the screen, he remembered my voice and helped me with my struggles. It was good to touch bases with him. I avoid young priests who wear cassocks. Many of them seem shallow, petty and judgmental to me. One priest's penance for the pornography use was to go to the statue of Mary on a side altar, touch the statue, and to say a prayer for healing. While the gesture might have been lovely symbolism, it didn't help at all. Prayers by themselves do not solve deep-seated problems. I prefer a priest who suggests action.
4174. I choose carefully to whom I go.
4175. I choose a consistent confessor because he has earned my respect and trust.
4176. I usually go on retreat or something similar. I generally prefer to go to someone I don't know. I have some discomfort if priest is a lot younger than me.
4177. I am seeing a spiritual director, a Jesuit, to whom I have been going on for a number of years.
4178. I go to whoever has the shortest line.
4179. I avoid priests I know well personally. Other than that, I go to whomever.
4180. Generally I go to whichever priest is open/most convenient, but I do have some I avoid due to prior bad experiences.
4181. I have a consistent confessor whom I know and respect and go to when he is available.
4182. Being anonymous and unknown to the priest has its benefits but I prefer speaking to a priest who knows me and has a broader sense of my life and activities
4183. I make sure to go to a priest at another parish who wouldn't know me otherwise.
4184. I go to someone who I think will be understanding.
4185. I go to other churches for confession. I don't feel comfortable confessing to my pastor.

4186. For years, I went to anyone except the priest at my home parish because he is also my boss. Recently, because of COVID, I have had to confess to him and now I continue to do so.
4187. I usually choose our parish priest as confessor, but I also enjoy an opportunity for confession with a visiting priest or at a retreat.
4188. I feel more comfortable with someone I know.
4189. I go to a consistent confessor. There is more to the sin than the sin. There are patterns, movement from one place to another (both good and bad). A regular confessor can be so helpful in this regard.
4190. I choose a priest who really knows me and has the same theology I do.
4191. I prefer going to a consistent person with whom I am comfortable.
4192. I go to whoever is hearing and has the shortest line.
4193. I will go to whoever is available.
4194. I just can't go to a priest who knows me personally.
4195. I would love to have a confessor with whom I could have a relationship. Until I find someone like that, I will continue to go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4196. I go to whoever is there, for timing mostly, but also because I feel like the Holy Spirit gives me who I need to see that day.
4197. I have a consistent confessor. I want to feel comfortable and not judged.
4198. I go to whoever is available. It's tough to find someone consistent.
4199. I generally go to the same one.
4200. I'll go to whoever is available usually, but I will avoid priests I know well.
4201. I go to whoever is hearing. I tend to prefer strangers. That way if the experience isn't great, I don't have to see that person all the time.
4202. I choose a consistent confessor. I don't like potluck when it comes to confessors.
4203. I'll go to whoever is available, but prefer some over others. My 87 year-old mother always preferred foreign priests. One day we both went to the same foreign priest, with an accent. After, I asked her, "Do you like going to him because you don't understand him?" She gave me a sheepish grin, nodded her head, and we both laughed!
4204. I go to whoever is hearing confessions because time and availability can be challenging sometimes.
4205. I have felt the need for a consistent confessor but have not yet found priest that fits the bill.
4206. I go to whomever is available since I don't know many priests that well. I also don't go to confess that often.
4207. I try to go with my favorite priest because he is merciful in his words, but when he is not available, I have no problem going somewhere else.
4208. I go to whoever is there.
4209. I go to an adjacent parish because I feel too close to my own pastor.
4210. I usually go to the same parish and confess with whoever is offering the Sacrament on that particular day. I do this because the time and day of the week this parish offers the sacrament is convenient for me.
4211. It depends. If I can, I'll go to the priest I like, but sometimes you just have to go to whoever is available.
4212. I choose my confessor as it feels more comfortable and makes it easier for me.

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4213. I choose one particular priest, who is extraordinarily generous with the time he provides penitents.
4214. I have a few favorites. I prefer to go at times they are not busy. But I miss communal penance services.
4215. I go where I'm not known. Priests who recognize me from their parish tend to get chatty.
4216. It doesn't matter to me who the priest is.
4217. A consistent confessor would be good, rather like a spiritual director. Where I am, priests often move parishes frequently.
4218. I have moved a lot so I go to whoever is available. It doesn't matter because I am there to open up to the Lord.
4219. I go to whomever is available as there is no way of knowing who is in the confessional. Perhaps the name of the priest would help, so that we might be able to have the same person know our spiritual progress.
4220. I go to whoever is there.
4221. To me, it is more a matter of avoiding one priest. I avoid the priest whose homilies seem political and judgmental.
4222. Who the priest is doesn't matter to me.
4223. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4224. In the past I would go to just one confessor, but now I go to whomever. I am a little wary of our pastor, since my friend went to him once, talked about interactions with her kids (who were difficult), he said angrily, "Don't you realize those children are a gift from God?" at a volume that others outside the confessional could hear.
4225. I go to whoever is there
4226. I try to find someone that speaks my language because it is easier for me.
4227. I mostly go to one because he is kind.
4228. Some priests have a light and are different. I prefer to choose the same one if I'm in my local parish. If not I go to whoever is in the confessional.
4229. I go to whoever is hearing. I don't care if it's the same priest.
4230. I used to choose a confessor I trusted, but I haven't found one in my new city. Now I just go to whoever, though I am hoping to find a confessor I trust to walk with me.
4231. I usually just go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I don't like to confess with priests whom I know on a personal level. I once confessed something to a priest I knew. He was the priest for young adults, and I guess it shocked him because he later asked those who knew him not to confess with him, and that made our relationship very awkward. I no longer speak to this priest as he left the parish.
4232. I go to whoever is there.
4233. I would normally go to the same confessor; unfortunately he was transferred to a parish that is too far for me to drive to. My pastor is a good confessor but because I am involved in the parish, I worry that he recognizes me in the confessional. He is a good priest and I know that he is happy that I am in confession and does not think any less of me, but it is still difficult sometimes.
4234. I go to the same priest as he also provides me with some spiritual direction outside of the Confessional.
4235. We have one priest in the parish so, when I go, it's to him.

4236. I prefer a consistent confessor. I like him to kind of know me and my habits, both good and bad.
4237. I normally go at the same time and place, which pretty much gives me the same confessor.
4238. I go to the same priest.
4239. Where I am, usually only one priest is hearing confessions and it's always the half hour before Mass so everyone knows you're going. I wish it was still offered at a time distinct from Mass so one could go more anonymously.
4240. The availability of the sacrament can be difficult. If I could, I would seek someone I felt is a prayerful person, but that is difficult and probably not for me to judge.
4241. I go to whoever is hearing Confession. It never occurred to me to go somewhere or to someone specific. When I need to go, I need to go.
4242. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4243. I used to have a consistent confessor until he died. Now I go infrequently.
4244. I most often go to a consistent confessor but if needed, I go to whomever is hearing. I like going to the same confessor because he knows my history.
4245. I don't feel like I go regularly enough to have a consistent confessor.
4246. Often there are not many choices. But I go to anyone who is hearing.
4247. I sometimes tend to go to someone other than my usual confessor because there are sins that are personally embarrassing to discuss.
4248. I do not go to a consistent confessor. If I am at a different parish or local, diocesan or national event, I go to who is available.
4249. I go to whoever is hearing to avoid the appearance or occasion to "Confessor Shop."
4250. I try to go to same one. I want someone who cares what I say
4251. I go to whoever is available.
4252. I usually choose a consistent confessor. He is older and wise. He looks at the big picture and takes a long view.
4253. I go usually to whoever is hearing confessions, but I have actively sought out priests who seem more open minded or compassionate.
4254. Nowadays it's just the annual get-your-ticket-punched penance service. I go to the priest with the fastest moving line.
4255. I usually will go to the Franciscans when available. They are always easy to talk to.
4256. I will go where I feel comfortable with the celebrant.
4257. I have gone to varied confessors.
4258. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. He can absolve my sins.
4259. I used to have a consistent one, but since I have changed parishes a few times, I just go when it is available.
4260. I go to whomever. We've moved a lot and have not been at the same parish very long.
4261. There are limited choices in my area.
4262. I try to go to the same confessor. It helps because he knows my history and what I struggle with.
4263. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4264. There are people I avoid, but not ones I go to regularly.
4265. I have the same priest out of convenience.
4266. I just go to my parish. While I don't choose specifically, I do avoid one priest.

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4267. I confessor to whoever is hearing. I'd rather not be recognized as that person with a given slate of sins.
4268. I stick with the same one now. He knows my story and, though he makes mistakes in guiding me, I know his heart is in the right place.
4269. I go to a local church, not my own, as I am embarrassed to confess to my pastor.
4270. I've attempted both ways but haven't met a consistent priest who meets my needs.
4271. My pastor is the only choice.
4272. I go to whoever is hearing, but if I have an option, I will go to a particular priest if he's available.
4273. Currently, I scramble to find someone to hear my confessions. My state in life will be changing soon and I plan to find a regular confessor, who is not also my spiritual Director
4274. Any priest available is fine.
4275. I generally go to whomever is available, but for consistency, I'll go to someone I know.
4276. I try to find someone I don't know. Most of the stuff I 'struggle' with are sins considered to be mortal by the Church's teaching. As a woman, it's very awkward to talk about sexual sins with a priest, especially when it involves really personal issues, like how you live out married sexuality when your spouse struggles with erectile dysfunction that makes "church approved" sex difficult? I don't want to have to explain this every single time and I feel resentful about even having to mention it. That's usually why I try to find occasions where I will never have to see the priest again to confess. I always pray they don't ask questions about it.
4277. I go for convenience over consistency
4278. I wish I had a consistent confessor but times have changed. Especially being older, I feel the younger generations deserve the relationships with the priests and are more necessary.
4279. I go to any confessor.
4280. I choose a rather distant parish because they offer confessions every single weekday before noon Mass. Two priests alternate as my confessors, so I am never sure of which priest will be there on a particular day. "By appointment only" confessions are not acceptable to me because I insist on anonymity.
4281. There doesn't seem to be a consistent confessor in my area.
4282. I go to whoever is free, but that hasn't worked well for me lately. The last two experiences I felt the priest rushed me and was not empathetic or loving in responding to my struggles.
4283. I try to go to a consistent confessor if I can.
4284. I am usually happy to go to most priests. I don't expect them to be my conscience and so I don't seek out "easy" priests.
4285. It depends. I would prefer a consistent confessor, but with so few priests it can be hard.
4286. I prefer to go to places outside of my parish. I guess I'm just embarrassed to go to the priests I know and am friendly with.
4287. I got to a consistent confessor if I appreciate his style.
4288. My situation makes it hard to get to confession. And to do so at a consistent place.
4289. I would prefer a consistent confessor, but due to circumstances in my life now, I pretty much have to take who I can get.

4290. I used to drive to different parishes to ensure that the priest would not recognize me, but now I have a good relationship with my priest and I feel comfortable confessing to him regularly.
4291. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I like to go to priests who I know will not just say, "Do well in school" and "God loves you."
4292. I confess to priests that I know are good. I have several that I go to regularly who are awesome.
4293. I have typically gone to my pastor versus hopping across town to see the priest who doesn't know me. I want to challenge myself to be completely honest to someone who knows me well. I want the experience to be serious and not easy.
4294. I regularly go to my pastor, or his vicar if he is not there that day. They're close and they're good priests.
4295. I prefer a consistent confessor. The experience is better when I know what to expect from my confessor.
4296. I do try to choose a consistent confessor who is committed to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
4297. I go to whoever. I do not want a personal relationship.
4298. A regular confessor helps me keep humble. It also helps him assist me in a more personalized way.
4299. I haven't had a regular confessor in a while. The pandemic hasn't helped either. Personally, any confessor works for me.
4300. I never know who is behind the confessional. I request confession with a priest that I trust.
4301. I like a consistent confessor who knows my struggles. It helps me to have a consistent message to help me grow closer to Christ.
4302. I go to whoever is there because of my own inability to schedule.
4303. I go to the same parish priest.
4304. I go to whoever is there.
4305. I think consistency would be helpful, but go to whoever is hearing.
4306. I always went to our pastor until he was transferred.
4307. I'm not consistent. I would love to be more so but the availability for confessions is minimal. There doesn't seem to be a lot of local priests with much of an interest in it. Those who are seemed to be bogged down with penitents and I am reluctant to add more to their schedule. I'm too impatient to wait in long lines.
4308. I go to whoever is available, although I just cannot go to my pastor as he is a close personal friend.
4309. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4310. I used to have the same confessor, but he was reassigned too far away. Now I just have those I avoid.
4311. I don't go often enough to have a consistent confessor.
4312. I go to a particular priest and he gives good counsel and advice. I also know that he will never muck up the words of absolution. I have had experiences where priests have adlibbed or "improved" the words of absolution. I've then left the confessional wondering if I was properly absolved. An easy way to avoid torturing penitents is for priests to say the formula correctly without substituting any words. It's not that difficult!

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4313. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, mostly because I'm bad at making and keeping a regular time to go.
4314. I go to whoever is available. I do not have a consistent relationship with a parish, so my attendance has been highly variable.
4315. I usually go to the same parish where a couple of confessors alternate. I don't have a strong relationship with either one, but I feel comfortable with both.
4316. It depends on how ashamed I am of my sins. I sometimes seek out more anonymous situations then. In most cases I go to a priest with whom I am familiar.
4317. When I was younger I skipped around because I felt like it protected my privacy better. Now I like going to the same confessor for continuity of care and so I don't have to provide a long backstory.
4318. I participate in my parish communal confession and go to different priests.
4319. I prefer going to my parish priest: he knows me and I am comfortable going to him.
4320. I usually go at a parish reconciliation service to any of the several priests who are there. I have a hard time going to my pastor.
4321. I have tried both.
4322. I have some I prefer over others, but I mostly look for a time that fits my schedule. I would say that there are some priests I consciously avoid.
4323. I usually go to whoever is available. Normally I do not like to go to my own priest because I prefer someone I do not know.
4324. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, but always at the same time, so it is often the same priest.
4325. I am so afraid now I would only go somewhere where I didn't know the priest, and would most likely never return since I would do it all wrong.
4326. I like to go to someone I know for minor little things. However, I have not been in a long time and have some serious things to get off my chest and I don't think I could face someone I know. My fear of being recognized has been keeping me from going.
4327. I like having a consistent confessor, and I try to go to the same priest. It can be hard, since Churches do not factor into their schedules that people have jobs and lives, especially as a young adult. The confessor that I choose to go to is very compassionate and kind. He's also a pastor of a local church for many years, and I think that factors into his love for people and how he can make anyone feel at home or at ease, even when you are telling some things that are really painful.
4328. I try to have a consistent confessor, but I try to go every week, so I take who I can get. I avoid certain confessors. Thankfully we have access to many priests.
4329. I've tried to choose a consistent confessor. Right now, I don't have one. There have been times when I have have gone to just anyone but I think I need a more consistent confessor.
4330. I got wherever there is a priest available, but I do have some confessors I prefer. I would like to have a consistent confessor, but this is difficult to find.
4331. I prefer a consistent confessor. I go frequently and I want someone to observe whether I'm making any progress.
4332. I make sure I go to a priest I don't know as I'm not comfortable confessing to someone who knows me. As it is, I'm always afraid I'm going to get yelled out. I have some sins I've never confessed out loud because I don't want to get yelled at.

4333. I do not have the benefit of a regular confessor in my area. My yearly retreat is my best opportunity.
4334. I like the same confessor. It just feels more "safe."
4335. I have done both according to convenience and availability.
4336. I have preferred priests who make me feel comfortable and not judged.
4337. I have a list of priests on my no-confess list.
4338. I am more sincere when I know that the confessor does not know me.
4339. Most of the time it's my parish priest. I trust him and feel comfortable talking with him.
4340. I simply wouldn't risk a random confessor.
4341. I have a consistent confessor, someone who is a friend and understanding.
4342. I choose a confessor that isn't in my home parish because I'm afraid that my parish priest, whom I talk to regularly, will recognize me.
4343. I generally go to whoever is my spiritual director at that time in life. But if it is a Reconciliation Service, I go to whomever.
4344. I usually just go to whomever I can get in to. But I do also try to go to one priest because I know he is a holy man and that he really does love the penitents and wants to help them to "go and sin no more."
4345. I only go to another parish on Sunday a couple of times per year and so normally I go to my parish priest.
4346. I like to choose the priest.
4347. I go wherever I can. I have six children. While I'd love to go to someone consistently that isn't realistic. It's all about scheduling for me.
4348. I would like to have a confessor. I am a new convert and I need extra time and instruction.
4349. I go to a different church than I attend for anonymity, as I am nervous every time.
4350. It depends. Sometimes I feel ashamed to tell the very same things to the person who had already heard them
4351. I go to whoever is there at my parish.
4352. It depends. I have done both.
4353. I am pretty open to who the Holy Spirit puts in my path.
4354. I prefer a consistent confessor. I know what I'm going to have happen!
4355. I go to whomever.
4356. I go to a priest I don't know. The priest at my church said that it is not a sin for a priest to repeat what they have heard in confession.
4357. I go to whoever is hearing confessions that day.
4358. Most of my confessions are to one priest, but when there is need, I will go to whoever is available.
4359. It depends. I go where I can get to, which is pretty random. Since confessions are normally scheduled only on Saturdays and there's a line, there's a lack of time to go.
4360. I sometimes have a confessor and other times just need absolution.
4361. I prefer to go to one of two priests because they know me well and it is easier to say what I need to say. They are compassionate and I truly believe they are Christ to me.
4362. I try to go to the same confessor. I feel more comfortable confessing to the same confessor.
4363. I use whoever is available although I prefer my parish Priest.

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4364. I go to one confessor. He is able to get to know me and continue helping guide me
4365. I go to whoever is hearing.
4366. Because confession is only once a week for 45 minutes, I go to one priest. There is no choice.
4367. There are three priests at my parish church. I go to whoever's light is green first.
4368. I try to avoid a priest I know or my home priest. I know it's silly but I'd prefer an anonymous confession.
4369. I tend to go to the other priest in town at the other church because he offers counsel and doesn't rush through things. He is more patient and kind.
4370. I like to go to a priest I know who can give me practical advice and counseling.
4371. I tend to go to the same priest so that I have accountability and he knows my history.
4372. I have no choice without traveling.
4373. I feel like confession is hard to come by sometimes and so I go wherever it is available.
4374. I have no choice, one priest.
4375. I prefer consistency and value the relationship.
4376. I mostly go to wherever is hearing confessions because I can only see my spiritual director every few months.
4377. Whenever I'm called to confession, it doesn't matter who is hearing.
4378. Most of the time, I go to a consistent confessor, unless a need prohibits this.
4379. I will choose any priest with whom I have had a decent rapport.
4380. I go to whoever is available
4381. I have a couple I go to regularly, as I feel they are very spiritual priests yet understand the weaknesses of their flock. They know me from Mass and from confession and are always encouraging me in my continued spiritual growth.
4382. I only go now right before Lent to whoever is there.
4383. I have not been consistently at one parish enough to start picking a preferred priest for confession. A large part of my decision is determined by which parishes or communities have confession available, since the schedules can vary wildly from parish to parish and are generally on the infrequent side.
4384. I would love a regular confessor but I feel the priests are too busy for that. So I go to whoever.
4385. I need to feel that the priest is living a life of holiness but is also a "human" being who will listen with compassion and forgiveness. These priests are difficult to find, meaning the number is low.
4386. I tend to choose the same confessor, but I don't mind when I have a different confessor. I usually find it refreshing to be heard by someone new.
4387. I go to whoever has confession.
4388. I try to choose the same confessor. I just really like the priest I am going to.
4389. I usually go to whoever is there. My line of thought is the Lord will provide me with the Confessor I need.
4390. I currently go to whoever is the confessor in the confessional. Since he is sitting in for Christ, it doesn't matter to me which priest I go to.
4391. I go to whoever is hearing.
4392. I try to go to the same confessor but it is not always possible.
4393. I usually go to whoever is available. I am not sure it matters to have a history if the priest does not remember my predicaments.

4394. I go to whoever is hearing confessions at the time, for expediency. I would prefer to have one regular confessor, but have not truly pursued this.
4395. I have experience with both, depending upon my schedule.
4396. I go to whoever is available. I do not go as regularly as I should, so I take the opportunities when they arise.
4397. I try to go to the same person consistently.
4398. Technically it's the same confessor (Christ) but he's usually in the form of the priest of the day.
4399. I go to whoever is hearing Confessions. I always want anonymous confession. I rarely go face to face.
4400. I go to whoever is available,. Sometimes it's difficult to find a priest.
4401. Sometimes I want to go to the same Father but he is busy. Many churches only meet by appointment and sometimes those appointments have to wait. Some churches do not offer confessions. Mine has confessions only on Saturdays, but other priests not want to do them.
4402. I've tried to stay with one, but every time I get used to someone, he gets transferred.
4403. It's a struggle to have the same confessor. Sometimes you do not want them to hear you say the same sin.
4404. I go usually to a different priest at parish Lenten and Advent penance services.
4405. I look for certain confessors who represent the face of God.
4406. I prefer a priest I do not know.
4407. I go to whoever is hearing confessions mostly, as I am a busy working mother of three.
4408. I have no consistent confessor now. I go to random confessors. Right now I have no favorite confessor.
4409. I have tried both. When I have sins of the flesh, the priest is sometimes not compassionate and judgmental and does not listen.
4410. I go to my pastor because I think it's better to stay within the parish.
4411. I don't choose a consistent confessor, but I do have a location I prefer. I go to confession whenever I visit the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, AL. I have never had a bad confession experience with any of the monks there. I'm also more likely to go to confession if I know there will be a confessional veil and if I know the priests take the seal of the confessional seriously. I won't go to a reconciliation service if I think priests will be in places where confession can be watched or overheard. Sadly I err on the side of "Don't go there," if I'm not sure how their confessionals are set up.
4412. I typically go to the same priest. I believe my confessor assists in my advancement spiritually and knows my sincerity and humility.
4413. I wait to visit the same confessor. He is very educated and thoughtful so his guidance makes sense to me.
4414. I go to different priests.
4415. I try to go to the same confessor but my schedule doesn't always permit it and I look for other confessors at different times.
4416. Usually I go to whoever is hearing confessions at our church, and that is usually the one priest at our church.
4417. I don't have one confessor, but most times it is the parish priest.

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4418. I generally go to the same priest. I'm comfortable with the same pair of shoes, too.
4419. I go to many Confessors, but if I find one I like, I will continually go back to him.
4420. I used to go to any priest who didn't know me, but now it is a matter of availability. If given a choice, I prefer a priest who is easy to talk to.
4421. I try to have a consistent confessor, because it tends to be more meaningful what he says to me.
4422. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. When I had a spiritual director, I had a more consistent confessor.
4423. I worked for my parish for a long time and taught in a Catholic school before that. I know many of our diocesan priests. It's hard for me to go to one of the priests I know very well, so I generally wait until there's a penance service and go to someone I don't know, if possible.
4424. For the bad stuff, I go out of parish so they don't know me. Otherwise it doesn't matter.
4425. Mostly I go to the same priest, but it's good to get a "second opinion" when the same sin keeps recurring.
4426. I go to whoever is hearing confessions but sometimes I like to go to a different confessor.
4427. We only have one priest at our parish so my confessor is usually consistent.
4428. I prefer complete anonymity.
4429. I go to whoever is available. I don't want bias insight.
4430. I generally go to whoever is hearing confessions. I've always wanted a particular confessor, but have never had one.
4431. I go to random priests.
4432. I like to go to a shrine with various priests who have a confession ministry over going to the local parish priests. I like the anonymity.
4433. Being at a small parish, we only have one priest. There are some priests in our diocese that I like going to when the opportunity presents itself. They're just more personable.
4434. I usually have the same one unless I can't go in the one time frame allotted.
4435. Many don't like going to the "parish" priest at communal reconciliation services, but I have a great relationship with him and feel comfortable talking about all my sins and issues. I do enjoy talking with a few others in the vicariate, too.
4436. I have a spiritual director, but usually go to confession at a parish where I found the new priests always use the correct words for absolution, where they have a frosted glass door so I can instruct my three year-old to stand right outside, but I can still tell he is there, and where confessions are available every day with usually under 30 minute waits. At my own parish, there are regularly scheduled at times that are difficult, with lines that mean you wait for an hour, which is super hard with two little kids also waiting. One of the regular times is right before Sunday mass. That's perfect for most people, but little kids won't sit through an hour long confession line followed by Mass, and we want them to participate in Mass to the best of their ability.
4437. I go to whoever is hearing confession.
4438. I have no preference. I go to whoever is hearing confession.
4439. A regular confessor is most helpful, but it's great to receive the sacrament whenever it's available.
4440. If a priest I know is hearing confession, I will go to him; otherwise I'll go to whoever.

4441. I prefer to go to someone other than my parish priest
4442. When I do go, it's just to whoever is hearing confessions. I don't feel like confession is the time to be picky.
4443. I like to be consistent.
4444. Usually I go whenever it fit my schedule best. If I had a preference, I typically go for more plain spoken priests.
4445. I have a preferred place for confession, although I do not go there exclusively. I like to go to more doctrinally faithful priests, which in my area happen to be a Franciscan order. They are great confessors: they listen, ask questions to understand clearly what my sins are or the circumstances, and give direction and encouragement. They are thorough and the Chapel provides adoration so I can pray and prepare well before my confession.
4446. I have moved recently and have not connected with the parish priest, so I go anywhere.
4447. I go to different priests sometimes when I am ashamed beyond normal. But I have also gone to the ones I know when I am ashamed to.
4448. I normally go to my spiritual director, but being a daily Mass goer at different churches, I will go spontaneously sometimes too.
4449. I go to whoever doesn't know me, even if it means going to another parish. I suppose my single biggest difficulty, then, is trusting my confessor to look beyond my sins.
4450. I usually have a consistent priest because I have to be more accountable since he knows me well and will give guidance in my many downfalls. If I feel the need to go to confession, I will go to whoever is available.
4451. I go to whoever is there at the time. I might prefer a consistent confessor.
4452. I always try to go to the same priest because he makes me comfortable and really helps me a lot. I don't like to go to other priests
4453. I'll go wherever it's convenient for me. I go at my parish or surrounding parishes. I make sure I know their schedules.
4454. I am a little nervous about going to the same confessor consistently, but I'm having trouble putting into words why that is. There are some priests whose names I'm thrilled to see on the confessional but I would feel awkward asking for an appointment to be able to see them specifically with regularity. I guess now that I think about it, the best confessors also seem the most busy confessors and priests.
4455. I used to have a Spiritual Director with whom I would go. When I go to the local Abbey, I go to the same priest. My parish is small, so normally I go to whoever is assigned. If it is a communal penance service, I go to the first available.
4456. I am happy with all the priests at Immaculate Conception. Even though it's no longer my parish, I still go for Reconciliation.
4457. I prefer regular confessors.
4458. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. If I have a choice, I have one young priest I am more comfortable with.
4459. I am comfortable with any confessor, but I most often experience the sacrament with my parish priest, because it's home base.
4460. I go to whoever is hearing but I still prefer one Monsignor.
4461. I usually go to the first available but try for the priests with more experience.

4462. I have a consistent confessor because I find that it helps keep me accountable. Even though I know he is bound by the seal of confession, there have been times that it has helped me avoid sin.
4463. I work in the parish so I always go to different parishes for Confession.
4464. Usually I go to whoever is hearing confessions, but there are priests I avoid.
4465. I go to whomever. I had a priest I liked for confession but he has been moved.
4466. It depends on what I need to confess and also the urgency of my confession. I'll go to anyone if urgent and a short list of sins. I prefer my regular confessor if I have a longer list or I'm working on breaking a pattern. It's helpful to see my spiritual director for consistency, but also intimidating if I've got a "big fish" confession sometimes.
4467. I feel more at ease with some priests
4468. I go to whoever is hearing. It's convenient.
4469. I see the same person almost always for years at a time but will see available priests when I am particularly troubled and the priest who knows me is unavailable.
4470. I go to a consistent confessor who can help me.
4471. I go to whoever is hearing confession. We have such a shortage of priests that I think it is unreasonable to pick and choose.
4472. I go consistently to one of three Confessors.
4473. I try to go to the same confessor because he knows my story, my background, my spiritual, mental and emotional issues. When I go to a different priest, I feel the need to give the background. I do believe that it is Jesus that I am speaking to and that the Holy Spirit guides the confessor, if he is open to receiving the Word. Unfortunately, I have met priests who joke they don't really listen to what the person is saying and I have sometimes gotten that feeling as well. I believe in those situations, the sacrament is still valid, but it makes the experience awkward.
4474. I would love to confess to a holy man consistently. I just can't find one. So I "settle" for absolution without the care of a shepherd who desires my growth and wants to help me achieve it.
4475. I really only go once a year. We go to our local parish to whoever is hearing confessions.
4476. I go to whoever is there.
4477. I grew up in a fairly small town and like to go where the priest doesn't personally know me. That way, I avoid things like being mistaken for my mom — I've been told I do sound like her — and being asked about an upcoming parish function after receiving absolution. I had a spiritual director for the bulk of my childhood and adolescence and would like that assistance again, but have been moving around the country for work and have not established that anew. I have driven out of my way to go to the priest who counsels penitents for 15-20 minutes.
4478. I go to a different church to be more anonymous. I know it shouldn't matter but it does.
4479. While I would love a good and consistent confessor, I don't know how to find him, and so I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4480. I go to priests who know me less so I don't have to face them.
4481. I live across the street from my parish so whoever is there is who I go to. It would be wonderful to have a consistent confessor but there just aren't enough priests or enough times for confession.

4482. There is little opportunity for a consistent confessor where I worship.
4483. I work in close proximity to much of the local presbyterate, so I tend to choose a confessor who does not work as closely with me, and who has a more convenient offering of times for confessions.
4484. Whoever is hearing, I go to. I like the anonymity.
4485. I choose either one of my current parish priests. I know they will do their part without deviations that make me uncomfortable or cause me to question if I was absolved. They will also not chastise me for confessing venial sins - they encourage this instead.
4486. I go to anyone.
4487. I do not have a consistent confessor, but there are definitely priests that I avoid. On the other hand, there are a couple who make me feel totally blessed and absolved after Confession.
4488. I go to whoever is there.
4489. I like to go to a priest I don't know. My "best" confessions, however, have been with a priest I knew.
4490. I go to whoever is hearing.
4491. Since we relocated, I haven't been as comfortable with the parish priest. We did attend a Reconciliation service where there were multiple priests available.
4492. I am what I would consider to be a devout catholic. I go to daily Mass. I know all of the priests at my church very well. I don't go to confession to them. I typically go to confession at a church where the priest doesn't know me and I don't know him. Confessing one's sins is hard enough without confessing them to someone who thinks more highly of you than you probably are.
4493. I go to whoever is available. I do not like going to someone I know.
4494. I have come to appreciate our pastor and his deep insights in the confessional. I just can't hear each word he says because he speaks too softly.
4495. I try to choose a good confessor whom I can go to consistently. I find it helps me to grow in humility and to experience the merciful love of God the Father.
4496. I usually try never to go to the same priest twice. I have never been taught or shown what to look for in the Sacrament of Confession.
4497. I will only go to confession when there is a confessor that I am comfortable with. I've had too many bad experiences to just open up with anyone.
4498. I have no preference and generally go to anyone.
4499. It depends upon the situation. I would much rather go to someone I know and respect.
4500. I used to go to a consistent priest but I moved and changed parishes.
4501. I typically will go to whoever is hearing confessions. I am always willing to go to new churches and parishes in whatever diocese I am currently in.
4502. I go to whoever is available. There's no reason for this other than convenience.
4503. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4504. I've seen the same confessor for the last 12 years because I live in a very small town and he's the only priest at our church.
4505. Before COVID, it was a consistent confessor who I felt really understood me. But COVID changed that and now I just go when it's allowed or when I can get an appointment.

4506. When I find a caring and holy confessor I stay with him. Unfortunately they all eventually leave.
4507. I go to confession at a neighboring parish rather than my own. My pastor's English is poor and at the moment there's no anonymity due to pandemic arrangements. The neighboring parish has generous confession times, has held "drive-through" confessions during the pandemic, and I have frequently gotten good advice in the confessional there. (I don't go to confession asking for advice; however good advice is valuable.) There are two or three priests who hear confessions there in rotation so not a consistent confessor.
4508. I go to who is there at that time. I'm not picky about the priest.
4509. I have about three priests that are my go-to priests. Every so often I will go to another.
4510. I go to whoever is hearing. There's no reason behind my choice.
4511. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4512. I usually go to priests at our parish. We're very lucky to have a few different but strong confessors. I don't mind which one of them I happen to have hear my confession.
4513. I don't choose a consistent confessor but I do avoid certain ones.
4514. I go to whoever is hearing confession, because I can't go to a regular priest.
4515. Most times I keep the same priest but it depends on necessity.
4516. Recently my experiences of going to confession have been when I am on retreat.
4517. I go to whoever is hearing confessions
4518. I go normally to the first available priest.
4519. I try to go to the same one, but when your archbishop moves priests around like people change their underwear, it makes it hard.
4520. I like to go to a Priest who really knows me.
4521. I do not go to anyone special, but whoever is available.
4522. I go to whoever is hearing, but not my parish priests.
4523. Lately, I have gone to one who is consistently kind and who gives spiritual advice.
4524. I only go to someone that I know for sure is understanding, compassionate and not chastising.
4525. I go to whoever that is available to hear my confession
4526. I tend to go to my pastor, who is knowledgeable and firm in the moral teaching of the Church; pays close attention to the more serious faults; gives good, concise advice about them; and imposes clear penances.
4527. I go to whoever is around.
4528. I confess to whoever is available, because he acts in persona Christi.
4529. I typically go to the pastor at my parish.
4530. I choose confessors and make an individual appointment. I'm always afraid of taking too much time and inconveniencing Father and others.
4531. I consistently go to another parish, not my priest.
4532. In a one-priest parish, there is not a choice. In a penance service, I generally choose our parish priest. Otherwise it is not a matter of choosing a priest, but rather eliminating some priests due to their theology.
4533. I would like to have a consistent confessor. I admit I only go to confession once or twice a year.
4534. I prefer a consistent confessor if I can, because it helps me with accountability.

4535. I wish I could be picky. I get whoever is around.
4536. I do not pursue a particular confessor. I have a spiritual director, so I do not feel the need for a consistent confessor.
4537. I choose a consistent confessor because I work on the one day (and only one hour) that our parish offers confession. That is hard to understand. I would like to see more times available. The priest to whom I go by appointment is truthful and doesn't hold back giving me direction where I really need it. I want someone who inspires me to be holier and gives me direction on specific reading materials and spiritual practices. He's thoughtful, wise and never rushes me. I feel blessed that he is nearby and that he is such a holy priest who is interested in saving souls.
4538. I have a consistent confessor.
4539. I have no preference about which priest to go to.
4540. I usually go to the same priest, mostly because I feel comfortable and it's convenient.
4541. I try to choose same priest, but half the times, I go to whoever is available.
4542. I want to have a relationship with the priest so I can be counseled based on knowledge of my spiritual state.
4543. I prefer going to priests that I know.
4544. We only have one priest, so there's not really a choice. I have gone to other parishes though. I prefer to mix it up.
4545. I like to go to a priest who speaks up so I can hear and is willing to speak to my sin individually and show me the error and how to correct it.
4546. I prefer to go to the same confessor when possible for accountability, but I'm happy to go to whoever is available.
4547. I go to whoever is hearing confessions at the time/location I am able to make. There is no particular reason aside from fitting into my schedule and knowing that there are many good confessors in my area.
4548. I go to a priest I'm not close to, so I can feel free and not hide any of my sins.
4549. I always like going to confession with particular priests I know are good confessors. You don't want a confessor who agrees with you all the time; rather you have the need for someone whom you respect.
4550. I go to whoever is hearing confessions for the sake of convenience. A consistent confessor and confession schedule (weekly, monthly) would certainly be better, but I'm not doing that now.
4551. I have had a regular confessor. I trust the priest and he makes it easier to confess.
4552. I try to choose the same confessor but in honesty I prefer the priests at a local shrine. They have a special grace with God and I believe I am heard and forgiven.
4553. Sometimes I'll go to a particular confessor because of his homilies during Mass.
4554. I go to any confessor.
4555. My prime purpose is to find anonymity, a confessor who does not know who I am, especially when the confessor insists on seeing who's in line. I typically go to a neighboring parish as a result.
4556. I try to go to priests whom I don't know personally.
4557. I usually go to a priest in my parish, and he is very understanding and supportive.
4558. I go to one who listens and comments like he's paying attention more.
4559. I won't go to my pastor. I will go to other priests assigned to our parish. I often will go to those churches or shrines that have extended and frequent times of confession.

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4560. I prefer random confessors.
4561. As much as I rely on my spiritual advisor I am more comfortable going to someone who doesn't know me.
4562. I don't have a consistent confessor, but I do like some better than others.
4563. I don't always go to the same confessor
4564. I confess at my local parish regularly and there are only two priests that rotate on Saturday. I have no personal preference.
4565. I go to whoever is available.
4566. When I was younger I would go shopping for a confessor I did not know and who would never see me again. Now I look to a confessor as I would a doctor: he needs to know me and my weaknesses in order to help me get healing.
4567. I usually choose the same confessor because I like the advice he gives me.
4568. I do have a priest that I consider my confessor. We are in different states, however and it is difficult to get together with him on a regular basis.
4569. I go to whoever is there.
4570. I definitely select certain priests. I don't trust some priests who make you feel small for coming to confess small sins or argue that you haven't even sinned.
4571. I usually go to whatever priest is available.
4572. I work in the church and so I do go to whomever is available provided I don't know him.
4573. I go to whoever is available. That's how it was in school.
4574. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4575. I now have a regular confessor, after having negative experiences.
4576. We only have one priest, so I have no choice.
4577. I go to whoever because I'm usually in a hurry and priests change from week to week.
4578. I prefer a consistent confessor and have a Spiritual Director.
4579. I do like to have a consistent confessor but at least right now, I don't have one. A consistent confessor knows and understands me better so he can provide more spiritual guidance and challenges that are specific to me and where I am.
4580. When I find one I like, I go back intentionally.
4581. I have a consistent confessor, mostly because my current parish is the only one in the area that doesn't require masks and I can't hear people talk when they have a mask on.
4582. I usually go to my parish priest.
4583. I go to whoever is hearing confession.
4584. I go usually to whoever is in the confessional.
4585. I go to different priests. It's typically time and location for me that matter most. I do enjoy some priests over others.
4586. I go to whomever, since I'm confessing to Jesus.
4587. At a penance service, I choose a priest that I don't know well.
4588. I actually go to another church instead of my home church. I feel better talking to someone who doesn't know me.
4589. I had a regular confessor and loved him. He was moved. Then I found another who I loved and he moved. So now, I go to whomever I can get to.
4590. I have a consistent confessor because it's easier to just go where and when I know someone will be there.

4591. I go to whoever will listen.
4592. I choose to go at sporadic times for confession, as to purposely mix up who I'm speaking with because I want a less biased audience.
4593. I go to whoever is available
4594. I go to whoever is there because of the shortage of priests and Church closings.
4595. I go to whoever is available as long as it's not face to face.
4596. Our parish only has one priest and so I always get the same one.
4597. I go to whoever is available but I sometimes avoid priests who are too close to my family.
4598. If I choose a confessor, it's because I like his style of working with people and his homilies.
4599. I usually try to go to one or two priests as they help me to live my faith better.
4600. I try to go to the same priest but it's hard when the diocese moves them every few years or so.
4601. When it's packed, I go to any priest. When it's not packed, I go to a priest I know and trust.
4602. I go to whoever is available.
4603. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4604. I usually go to the same priest because he always tells me I'm too hard on myself and that I'm a good person.
4605. I go to whoever is hearing confession, but I prefer a priest I don't know personally.
4606. I go to someone who doesn't know me, usually at a nearby parish. I'm not comfortable confessing to someone who knows me.
4607. I like going to confession with someone I don't know and going in a confessional.
4608. I prefer not to go to my parish because the priests know me and know my voice. It's silly but I prefer total anonymity.
4609. I try to go to a priest I am familiar with.
4610. I go to whoever is available.
4611. I go to whoever is hearing.
4612. I go to another parish.
4613. I normally go to a specific priest.
4614. I go to whoever is there that day.
4615. When I had a consistent home Church, I felt it was helpful for the priest to be familiar with my struggles.
4616. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I don't have any preference.
4617. I go to whoever is there.
4618. I go to whoever is serving.
4619. I try to go to a consistent confessor, when the priest's schedule permits.
4620. I go to whoever is there.
4621. I go to whoever is available. I enjoy anonymity in confession.
4622. I let the Spirit guide me.
4623. Confession is so limited in my diocese that you're at the mercy of whoever is available.
4624. I have a consistent confessor. I choose him because it is easier to talk with him.
4625. I go to anyone available. Confession is not spiritual direction.

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4626. I used to be consistent then I lost contact with the priest. Now it's haphazard. I feel like either a random priest is not invested in who I really am because he doesn't know me or I don't go because the priest knows me too well (I work for the Church).
4627. I prefer a consistent confessor, so he knows my struggle
4628. I have been going to my parish priest as he knows me and my situation and gives me great guidance.
4629. I try to go consistently to a priest who is a good confessor and avoid those who are not, but I'll go to anyone if it's been more than a month or if I feel I really need the grace of the sacrament
4630. I don't have a consistent confessor and always use any opportunity whenever a priest is available. I believe that all confessors occupy the position of Jesus Christ.
4631. I usually go to the same confessor.
4632. I prefer a consistent confessor who is aware of my sins and habits, who can offer me help in growing in virtue. But if I am out of my rural area, I sometimes take advantage of the chance to go to others.
4633. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I don't go consistently enough to have a favorite one.
4634. I generally choose particular confessors when I can. But I also go on Good Friday, when there are several priests present and everyone lines up and we go to confession. I always go face to face.
4635. I don't necessarily seek out certain confessors, but there are ones I do try to avoid. The ones I try to avoid seem mechanical and "going through the motions" or tend to lean towards reprimanding instead of encouraging.
4636. I will go to almost any priest as long as he is not my boss.
4637. I try to go to the same priest, but if he's unavailable, I'll go to whoever is hearing confessions because I feel that if the confessor hears how sincere I am in my confession, he'll give me absolution.
4638. I try to go to my pastor as much as possible, but the times don't always work for us. I pretty much take whoever is available when I can go.
4639. Sometimes I go to a priest that I know will be quick, understanding and brief. Other times I'll go to one I don't know if I don't really want to discuss things and have sins to confess that I am embarrassed about. Other times I will schedule a time to go with a priest I do know if I'm struggling with something in particular or need to talk more in depth about a sin that I'm struggling with.
4640. I tend to choose confessors who don't know me. I grew up with a proper confessional, so I prefer anonymity. I know it's silly for me to feel this way.
4641. I tend to go outside of my own parish because of the fear of being judged. This is my doing and not the priests.
4642. I go to any priest for confession. I had a confessor in the past to whom I went to regularly.
4643. I go at a consistent, convenient time at a parish with priests who aren't bad.
4644. I go to our pastor most of the time because he is in the Confessional at our church. But I also go to other priests when I meet with them outside of the parish. I miss the priests that I like as confessors: they just don't live near me any more.
4645. I like going regularly to the same priest so there is continuity, but I also dislike inconvenient schedules.

4646. I go to whoever's available.
4647. I think it's cute that the author of this question thinks many Catholics have a choice of confessor! Maybe in cities, perhaps? Parishes are large, confession times are limited: I feel lucky to have any priest at all available!
4648. My spiritual director is my confessor. It makes it easier since he knows my soul better.
4649. Whoever is hearing confession.
4650. Consistency is helpful but if I need to go I'll go to the first I can find.
4651. I go to a confessor who doesn't know me personally.
4652. I go consistently to the same priest out of habit, but I feel going to others would help expand my spiritual life.
4653. I have no consistent confessor because at my parish we have several priests and many available times.
4654. I have a regular confessor but also go to others on a regular basis. The first knows me well and that is valuable, but so is a different perspective.
4655. I often go to the parish priest (I have no other choice and he is good) but I like to go when I am out of town, so that I can be anonymous and speak directly to God better.
4656. I have a consistent confessor mostly because I know who I feel comfortable with.
4657. My spiritual director and the pastor of my parish are really the Fathers I go to. I trust them both.
4658. I have had a consistent confessor a couple of times but not by choice but because it worked out that way.
4659. Before retirement, it was hard to find a time for confession outside of my long working hours. So I would go wherever they had confession times that worked for me. Now I usually go to my parish priest, whom I have known for a long time. And I go more often. God bless our priests who make confession available!
4660. I just go to whoever is available, but it is usually to the same priest.
4661. I am starting to focus on finding one priest.
4662. I go whenever I have the opportunity, whether or not it's the same priest. But I especially like to go with priest who are known to be conservative theologically, whom I know give advice that does not go against the Church's teaching.
4663. I go to whoever is hearing, I think because I still have a bit of that "he'll think less of me if he knows me" hangup!
4664. I look for serious priests. I have a few go-to priests and seek them out. There are certainly priests I avoid.
4665. I choose a consistent confessor who knows my character and personality, and with whom I feel comfortable seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Any comments provided or penances given are gratefully accepted because I know of his genuine interest in my spiritual growth and well-being.
4666. I choose a consistent confessor for the ability to have more tailored guidance for spiritual growth.
4667. I do not choose a consistent confessor. I have preferences based on the confessor's way to articulate and speak to my heart. But I go to the priest who is available.
4668. "Whoever is hearing confessions" is okay with me. New priests sometimes take their time and offer more counseling so that could be good unless there are a lot of people waiting.
4669. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.

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4670. I try to go to a consistent confessor so that I don't have to explain the context of my life.
4671. My preference is for a consistent confessor, though it's not always an option. I prefer to go to confessors that I know are "good." With an unknown confessor, I fear having a bad experience, either harshness, poor advice or flippancy.
4672. I go to a consistent confessor most of the time. If we have a group of priests hearing confessions, I may go to another priest. My priest knows me. His penances are more in line with what I need.
4673. I have a regular confessor because he's fair and stern.
4674. I am between spiritual directors, so I go to whoever is available!
4675. I believe that a consistent confessor is beneficial to my spiritual growth but I am aware that priests have limited time and I occasionally might need to see someone else.
4676. In the past, I chose a constant confessor, but I don't have a regular one at this time.
4677. I try to use a consistent confessor, our pastor. Most of the time he is the only one available. Even when I have a choice, I choose him because I just feel comfortable with him.
4678. I try different priests because I don't want them talking to me about other things during confession.
4679. It is always the same priest who is there.
4680. I used to have a particular confessor, but as I grew as a Catholic, I learned to go to whoever is available.
4681. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I don't know any priests personally (my pastor of eight years doesn't know my name). I go behind a screen so it doesn't matter who I go to.
4682. I usually go to the same priest so that I can make progress in my journey
4683. I usually go to whoever is available for hearing confessions. It's a question of time management.
4684. I go to whoever is hearing. I usually don't go to my parish priest. I just feel uncomfortable.
4685. I go to whoever is hearing.
4686. In the past few years, I am trying to make more frequent confessions and often I am not in the same place at the time of confession, so I go where confessions are being heard. I have often wanted to go to the same confessor with questions, but I do not want to take up his time and make his line so long. That is probably a wrong attitude but hard to overcome.
4687. I prefer a consistent confessor because I am more comfortable.
4688. I have a regular confessor now who is also my spiritual director. He is familiar with me and my spiritual needs and can address those.
4689. I use the same confessor for consistency sake.
4690. I go to whichever priest is available
4691. If I need a confession for an indulgence, I'll go anywhere. If I have an issue that I need help with, I seek out holy confessors.
4692. I go to different confessors depending on their availability.
4693. For me anonymity is key and so I go to different confessors.
4694. I go wherever confession is available.

4695. It depends on what I am confessing. Most often, there are four priests I regularly rotate among, depending on my schedule. I have had positive confessions with each of them in the past and trust them and their advice. At times I avoid those priests when I am repeatedly confessing especially a mortal sin and I am ashamed to be back after only a few days or when I need to talk through if something is mortal sin or not and don't want to talk with a priest who will know my voice. It is always fear or shame that leads me to seek other confessors.
4696. If I find a nice one, I will stick with him for as long as I can.
4697. There is never a reason behind whom I choose. I usually just go to the closest one or shortest line.
4698. I go to whoever is hearing simply because as long as they are priest I don't care.
4699. I have done both. I do prefer going to a confessor I am familiar with. It makes it easier having a personal relationship because I feel as though I am talking with a friend and confidante.
4700. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, as ultimately God is always the one who forgives my sins, regardless of the confessor who hears them.
4701. Sometimes I choose. Other times, I allow the Holy Spirit to choose for me and go to the next available priest.
4702. I prefer to have a steady confessor, one who knows my battles and circumstances and offers counseling.
4703. I go to whomever because I don't go that often.
4704. I go to whoever is available.
4705. I go to whoever is available but if there are several priests available, and I happen to know one, I will go to that priest.
4706. I go to a local shrine and not my own parish. I don't care which priest is hearing at the shrine. I like that confessions are heard daily there, which makes it easier to go.
4707. I mostly hop around due to my schedule. It's also good for my kids to see different churches and priests.
4708. I drive to a different parish for a confessor who follows the proper form of the Sacrament and where the times that confession is offered is when I can go.
4709. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4710. I like consistency but I'm not sure that is best. When my confessor of choice was out due to an illness, I stopped going for a while and haven't been back. Sometimes I worry that my sins and concerns aren't important enough to bother the priest with. I worry that I'm treating the sacrament like a therapy session.
4711. I am careful to whom I go. I like to go to a really holy priest who will give me sound advice as well as absolution.
4712. I go to whoever is available. It is difficult to get a priest consistently.
4713. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4714. I go to whoever is there, mainly for convenience of my schedule and the priests'.
4715. I did have a regular confessor until the priest started to look at me different in an unfriendly way when he saw me outside of confession.
4716. When I was going regularly, I tried to go to the same confessor, in the hopes that he would become more familiar with me and vice versa.
4717. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.

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4718. I go to whoever is available at my parish but prefer some consistency in the hope that that priest will get to know me and be able to understand and speak to things with that insight.
4719. I go to whoever has confession at a time that is convenient for my schedule.
4720. I go to whoever is hearing.
4721. I am selective only because I work with priests and know that there are some that are far from "living icons of Christ" and even stray from Catholic teaching with their political agendas. I look for Christ in a priest.
4722. I just go to whoever is hearing confessions that day.
4723. I usually go to someone I don't know and hope never to see again.
4724. I go to whoever is available
4725. I usually prefer to go outside my parish, seeking anonymity.
4726. When it is face to face, I will go to a priest who is not in our Parish.
4727. I do like to go to the same priest. He knows me, is forgiving and professes God's love and mercy!
4728. I go to any priest.
4729. I go typically to someone who doesn't know me
4730. I go to any priest available because I believe that all priests are there to hear and to absolve my sins in the name of Jesus.
4731. I do not have a consistent confessor, but there are certain confessors I don't go to because they seem to be very impersonal.
4732. I am usually consistent for accountability and to build on previous penances.
4733. I typically go to communal penance services and pick my favorite of those there or, if I don't have a favorite there, I pick someone I don't know at all.
4734. I'm open to any confessor.
4735. I don't like going to my parish priests.
4736. I go to the priest who happens to be on duty. Because I am involved in my parish life, I am not comfortable going to my priests, so I have to travel elsewhere for Confession.
4737. I don't feel it necessary to go to any one in particular.
4738. I usually do not have a choice. When I decide I need to go to confession, there is only one priest available that day.
4739. I go to where there are multiple priests and don't know who will be hearing my confession. I like this because the Holy Spirit guides that decision.
4740. I used to go to a parish near my work but, since COVID, have been going to my parish priest.
4741. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. It has more to do with what time fits my schedule than who is hearing confession.
4742. I typically go to whoever is available and do not attend confession in my home parish because the priests there know me and I am ashamed to confess to them.
4743. I have tried both. I have several priests that I connect with and trust more to listen and give a caring response that comforts me and gives me things to reflect on.
4744. I have often thought a consistent confessor is exactly what I need, but I haven't acted on that.
4745. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4746. I prefer anonymity. If I could go "legitimately" between God and myself, I would do so.

4747. I usually go to same confessor because he knows the struggle I've been having.
4748. I go to whoever, because penance is to ask for forgiveness from God.
4749. I go to whoever is available.
4750. I try to choose the same priest as he helps me to be a better person. If he is not available, I go to whoever is available.
4751. We have only a choice of two at my parish. I usually go to the "older" priest, as he is closer to me in age. But I will go to the younger one if that is how it works out.
4752. I try to find a confessor whose schedule works with mine. I prefer to go to the same priest consistently, as I think he is better able to give me advice. Also it is good for me to know I will eventually have to go in again and say the same thing, which provides a little humility and a push to do what's right.
4753. I try to go to the same priest because I hope he remembers me and is able to give me direction to overcome the same sins.
4754. I try to go to the same confessor based on my previous experience of how I feel his advice to me was helpful with the sins I have confessed.
4755. Generally, I go to whoever is hearing confessions, as a matter of practicality. However, because I routinely go to confession at the same place, I often have the same confessor.
4756. Lately, I've been going to different confessors. I am known by my parish priests too well and don't wish to prejudice them.
4757. I usually choose a priest from somewhere else whom I may never see again. Anonymity is important for me.
4758. I aim for older priests because they have enough experience to be able to see the gray in between the black and white. People need accompaniment, not lectures. I no longer have a regular confessor. I wish I could find one. I haven't any one who is good at it lately.
4759. I would like to have a consistent confessor, but I haven't found one. I avoid my pastor who often says we should go to "him" for confession. It's Jesus I seek, not so much my pastor. He confuses me if he starts reading scripture or new prayers that change the order of confession.
4760. I try to go to the same priest because he knows my weaknesses. It took awhile to find one. Not all priests treatment the Sacrament of Reconciliation equally.
4761. When I find a good confessor, I stay with him until I am forced to switch by his unavailability.
4762. I've done both throughout my lifetime. Lately I go to whoever is available but I have a favorite confessor whose line I'll get in if available, even if it means a longer wait.
4763. I usually avoid my pastor. I just don't feel comfortable
4764. It doesn't matter to me who I confess to, as long as he is willing to listen to me and I believe he is willing.
4765. I will go to any priest who is hearing confessions but I tend to prefer a priest who does not know me. I can feel funny saying my sins to a priest who knows me, because I tend to think I am supposed to be perfect and sinless.
4766. I tend to travel to other parishes so I don't have to confess with my normal priests.
4767. I choose whoever is hearing confessions. Each priest hearing confessions is to standing in for Christ.

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4768. Most times I just go to whoever is hearing confessions. I usually don't go to a priest who knows me very well.
4769. I am more careful now and purposely decide which confessor to go to. I always go face to face.
4770. I have a consistent confessor.
4771. I try to go to the same priest.
4772. I go to whoever is in the time slot that I am available.
4773. I go to whoever is hearing them; they are all Jesus.
4774. I have been trying to find a priest who I have had a good experience with so that I can go back to him over and over again. I may have that person now. But the problem is the convenience of the timing of the confession.
4775. I go to any priest.
4776. I go to a very holy priest. He is compassionate, smart and gives great advice. The number one thing I look for is holiness in a priest. He really cares.
4777. I choose a consistent confessor when possible, in part because I know what to expect. I find confessors' "styles" are quite different from each another, with some being pretty formal and others being more informal and conversational. The confessionals themselves are also quite different. There are some churches that still have the pre-Vatican II confessionals where face-to-face is not an option. Sometimes there isn't any option besides kneeling.
4778. Sometimes I prefer that the priest who doesn't know me. But lately my parish priest has been an amazing confessor and has helped me to grow spiritually. His penance is actually taking action in something I keep failing in and he makes me really put an effort into doing better.
4779. At times, I prefer the familiarity of particular priests; however, I am comfortable confessing to whoever is available at the time.
4780. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4781. I have a regular confessor in my Spiritual Director. On occasion, I go to an "on call" priest at a local shrine, when I do not want to wait until I see my Spiritual Director.
4782. I wish I could choose the same confessor, but you have to go to whoever hearing confessions that day.
4783. I go to whoever is hearing, but will avoid priests I know as I feel uncomfortable.
4784. I go to anyone because I prefer anonymity.
4785. I go to whoever is there.
4786. There are about 2-3 priests I will go to, depending on what time works best
4787. When a consistent confessor is available, I go to him, but I do not really mind going to anyone. I'm looking for the priest that normally help me grow.
4788. I have two priests in nearby parishes that I like but I do not mind going to others.
4789. I go to whoever is hearing. I suppose that if I had a serious sin to confess, I may choose to go outside of my immediate parish to a priest who I may not work with on a regular basis.
4790. When I find one that suits me, who probes and challenges, I will stick with him until he leaves or is transferred.
4791. I try to be consistent so that confessor gets to know me.

4792. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. It would be much better for me to have a regular confessor, but I would have to carefully arrange my schedule to try for that and it still depends on who is scheduled. It may not be "my" priest.
4793. I always try to go to the same confessor because I feel as if he is listening to me and he always offers encouragement and compassion.
4794. I do like some priests more than others. I like the variety of advice, and how they differently point out a bad habit.
4795. I go to whoever is available.
4796. I go to whoever is in the confessional.
4797. Sometimes I go to someone who knows me and is already sympathetic; other times, I choose a perfect stranger when I have something embarrassing to confess.
4798. I don't have a preference, so whoever is hearing confessions is fine. But I work at a parish, so sometimes it feels easier to go to another parish rather than go to confession to my own parish priests who are bosses or coworkers.
4799. Generally I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I have had a regular confessors a few times in the past and the only hesitation is just that its awkward to have a person who knows me also know my greatest weaknesses. But that is just an issue of pride on my part!
4800. I prefer a consistent confessor. It helps me be accountable.
4801. I like to mix it up
4802. I go when and where it is convenient, because it is necessary for me to go.
4803. I choose a consistent confessor as he will know me and understand me.
4804. I go to whomever. I have not found anyone that I would like to have as a consistent confessor.
4805. If there is someone that I really enjoy the presence of, like a good pastor, I will usually go to him. When you have a good understanding between two people it is a lot easier than seeing a new person every time you confess.
4806. I go to whoever is available. This is because I am able to see different priests and how they react to my sins and because I can experience what it's like in different settings of the Church.
4807. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. It's just easier.
4808. I go to whoever is hearing.
4809. I do not go to my pastor. He is great, but I feel awkward sharing this information with him.
4810. I would prefer a consistent confessor but the priests change so often at our church that the situation isn't possible. We just stand in lines and go to whoever opens the door next. It seems very transactional.
4811. I have done both. Usually I go to whoever is hearing confession, but sometimes, if two priests are hearing confessions, I'll choose one over another. However, if one truly listens to God, he can say volumes even if the priest's words are few.
4812. I do not choose a consistent confessor. I go to one of those who comes for Reconciliation Services.
4813. I typically go to whichever church or priest is here and has confessions at the time that I feel like I need to go. This helps me make sure I'm able to go to confession sooner rather than later. However, there's a shame component to it as well where I don't want the same priest to hear me confess the same things over and over again.

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4814. I choose various confessors for the sake of convenience.
4815. I go to whoever is available.
4816. I would like to be able to go to the same priest all the time.
4817. Mostly I go to whoever is available. I like to hear other priests' thoughts and spiritual advice.
4818. Depending on my location, sometimes I choose a consistent confessor. I go to whoever is hearing confessions at other times.
4819. I like all of our priests, as they all bring something valuable to my confession. Therefore, I will go to whoever is hearing. I've even had visiting priests before and don't mind, as they can give a fresh perspective as well.
4820. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4821. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. Sometimes I go to another church in our area, but not too often because in our parish our priests offer confession 1/2 hour before all Masses in addition to our Saturday confession hour.
4822. I go mostly at reconciliation services so the priest is always different.
4823. I go to whoever is hearing Confession, and when there are two lines, I go to the shorter.
4824. I go to who is available, based on timing and accessibility.
4825. I look for someone with the ability to listen.
4826. I prefer to have the same confessor once I find one that is a good fit. When necessary I will go to whoever is available. I would rather have a fruitful and positive experience in confession, which is why I prefer to have the same confessor.
4827. I go to a confessor who I don't work with or know personally. I also choose a confessor with a reputation of being a very orthodox, holy priest.
4828. I feel like my parish priest would know too much, so I go to other priests.
4829. I go to the priest I prefer if possible. If I have no choice, I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4830. Generally, I go to whoever is available. But there is a certain priest I avoid because his penances are so vague you never know if you've actually completed the penance.
4831. I go to whoever is hearing confession
4832. I have never had a regular confessor, but I met a priest at my last confession who I would follow across the country. He was patient, understanding, easy to talk with and simply open.
4833. I go to the same priest as often as I possibly can. I seek this priest out for spiritual guidance regularly. I've known this priest for a long time. I trust him and I value his advice.
4834. I don't have to have one specific Priest.
4835. I usually go to whoever is hearing confession. If there more than one priest, then I go to the shortest line.
4836. I found a priest about 15 miles away whose times fit my schedule where I can prepare first, plan and not be rushed. He seems to consider confession important enough to schedule a generous available time. I appreciate that.
4837. I do choose a consistent confessor. I appreciate someone who teaches me on a spiritual level. I also like the way this confessor gives penance.
4838. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4839. I go to whoever.

4840. I have a serious liturgical difference with my current pastor. I avoid going to confession with him.
4841. Either is acceptable.
4842. I usually choose a confessor because I don't feel comfortable going face to face or having recognition.
4843. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions, unless there is one line that is moving about 15 minutes per person. I like to hear other priests and their different penances so it is not so routine every time.
4844. I would rather go to a stranger.
4845. I go to whoever is there.
4846. I choose because I want someone who will not treat me like an assembly line going to confession. I want someone to take time with me if I need it.
4847. I do not have a consistent priest. I prefer to go to someone other than my parish priest.
4848. I try to go to the priest who has helped me with my last problem.
4849. The parish priest is my boss, so I choose someone else.
4850. Most of the time, I've gone to confession at my parish, and I'm not selective. But there were a few times, with mortal sexual sins, that I went to another parish so I wouldn't feel aversion at seeing my priest the next day at Mass. Perhaps I wasn't humble enough to face my own sin. However, that's past me now.
4851. I go to whoever is available, usually based on when I can make it.
4852. I go to whoever is hearing them. I often will choose a visiting priest whom I don't know. It is easier to talk with someone who doesn't know and see me regularly.
4853. I will go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4854. Half the time, I go to whoever is there. The other half, I go to my spiritual director.
4855. Due to time constraints, I go to whoever is hearing.
4856. I choose different priests. Sometimes I feel one might give more advice than another.
4857. I go to confession to whoever will hear me out. Whoever is in the confessional is a representative of God and the advice given to me is through God.
4858. I go to whomever. I go often and do not want to put the priest out to deal with long lines when there are other people who are anxious to go to confession.
4859. I do have someone I prefer just because I really feel his prayers as I am speaking. He listens and at the same time prays so deeply as I speak. But the other priests at my parish are all kind as well and open, so it is never an issue if I get another one. They are all really wonderful.
4860. I have gone to the same pastor since my experience in December. It has been wonderful. He provides me with different prayers I have long forgotten or new prayers and gives me information about religious books to read.
4861. I go at times I can make it.
4862. I try to go to the same confessor but will go to any priest
4863. When I can, I have a preferred priest at my parish. He always is merciful, gives good guidance and will recommend a saint or author who might be helpful if relevant. But typically I just go when my busy-mom-of-three-little-kids-life matches up with confession times.
4864. I go to whoever is available.
4865. I choose the same confessor because I feel more confident with the same priest.
4866. I go to whomever. My pastor is very comforting and it is a joy to meet with him.

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4867. I choose a consistent confessor.
4868. For a while I avoided a certain priest because I felt he was intimidating and judgmental but he happened to be the one hearing confession the last time I went and it was not a bad experience.
4869. I usually go to the same confessor because of comfort level. However, I will go to others as the opportunity arises.
4870. I don't look for a specific confessor.
4871. I go to any priest.
4872. I have not had a bad confessor in decades. So I go to whoever is available.
4873. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4874. I have a Spiritual Director whom I see monthly and he hears my confession.
4875. I go to whoever is hearing. It's usually the parish priest.
4876. I haven't found a consistent confessor yet.
4877. It doesn't matter who I go to but I haven't gone for a long time since they took away the confessional booths.
4878. I go to a consistent confessor: he knows me and is able to offer insights into patterns of sin in my life that can help me recognize it more easily and change.
4879. Because I live in a rural area, it's harder to go to different priests.
4880. It depends on the situation. I may go to an unfamiliar church, or choose a priest who tends to guide me the most thoroughly. Some people want to choose those who give the lightest penances. But I want the truth and to do whatever penance is required for the situation.
4881. I have moved frequently, but I try to find a regular confessor.
4882. I go to whoever is available—all priests are acting on God's behalf.
4883. I go to my parish priest who I'm fairly comfortable with. Besides, God knows all and there is the seal of confession.
4884. Because of where I live, sometimes I go to priests in other parishes or states.
4885. I have no particular confessor
4886. I only go to reconciliation with a priest stranger. I am uncomfortable telling my faults to someone I'll see again.
4887. I usually prioritize convenience.
4888. At some point, I would like to find a regular confessor I am most comfortable with. I currently see whoever happens to be hearing confession when I go. After I settle permanently post-grad, I hope to find someone in that local area.
4889. I try to go to the same, most of the time. I have been more comfortable in receiving meaningful penances, or in discussing something that might be a concern. One priest I had a few years ago was awesome in discussing prayer! Always a joy!
4890. I try to go to a parish priest I have known for a while.
4891. According to canon law, there is no difference between the efficacy of the sacrament if the confessor is a drunk old priest or a wise sage. So why I should choose one or the other?
4892. I will seek whoever is available, but will return to a friendly priest who offers good advice.
4893. I never want to go to my home priest because I work for the church and it feels weird. This makes it really hard to get to confession because very few churches offer confession at a time good for the general public

4894. I shop around.
4895. I go to whoever is hearing and acting as representative of Church.
4896. I go to whoever is free
4897. Usually I go to whoever is hearing confession
4898. Usually I try to go to someone I think will inspire. I've moved over years and have different confessors at different churches.
4899. I try to remain anonymous. I prefer the lack of judgment that seems to come with same person.
4900. I usually go on Saturday afternoon trying to arrive early.
4901. I normally go to my parish priest.
4902. The answer depends on what and why I am going to confession.
4903. I prefer certain priests but don't go to confession often enough to choose among priests.
4904. I usually do not go to my own parish, but consistently go to the same Church. Once there, it doesn't matter who I go to.
4905. I usually go to whoever is hearing confession. As a mother it is hard to get out of the house. So I go when I have a chance and look for a church that is hearing confession.
4906. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I would prefer the same priest but inconvenience of location doesn't make that possible.
4907. I go to my parish. We are fortunate enough to have three priests, so there is not only one confessor. I am not choosy.
4908. I go to whoever is hearing them at a communal service.
4909. I try to go to a consistent confessor. That way I can get better feedback on the seriousness of my sins and better counsel.
4910. We have so few priests that I have no choice.
4911. I'd probably like a regular confessor, but I typically choose based on time convenience.
4912. I have a priest who is a close friend. I prefer to go to him, but I'll go to anyone available. I prefer my friend because we laugh a bit before I ask him to put on his Jesus hat and get down to the serious business at hand. The informal beginning helps make me less nervous.
4913. I go to whomever because I have little kids and beggars can't be choosers.
4914. I have always had a consistent confessor.
4915. I tend to go to the same confessor as I feel more comfortable going to someone who knows me outside the confessional, too. The other reason I go to the same person right now is because he is my Spiritual Director and he let's me go at the end of direction, so there is no standing in line!
4916. I go to whomever.
4917. I go to my pastor. I am comfortable with him.
4918. I try not to confess with my parish priest.
4919. Both our parish priests are excellent so I go to both without hesitation.
4920. I go to whoever is available. When I feel the urge and/or need to go I want to do it as quickly as possible.
4921. I always go to a priest who does not know me.
4922. I go to whoever is hearing confession. I would love to have a spiritual advisor but never felt the invitation or encouragement to do so.

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4923. I go to any priest. The difference in confessors can be helpful.
4924. I usually go to my local pastor unless I am traveling.
4925. I choose my pastor because he knows me.
4926. I try to go to a consistent confessor if possible but I have been so fortunate in the last seven years with priests who were very understanding.
4927. In the last five years I have been lucky to have a consistent confessor. He knows me and my journey.
4928. I go to the same confessor.
4929. When I do, I go to someone who doesn't know me.
4930. I prefer consistent confessors, especially because it intensifies my hatred for my sins.
4931. I appreciate the Sacrament for adult spiritual growth and would like a consistent confessor as a better choice.
4932. I have not had a consistent confessor. If I were to attend more regularly and were struggling with the same issues, I might opt to choose someone who is aware of my struggles.
4933. We have 2 priests who alternate and I go to whoever is available the day I attend. I'd like to have a consistent option, but this is a large parish and neither priest knows me anyway. We sit behind a screen, so even if I did develop a relationship, the absolution is unfortunately set up to be anonymous.
4934. The better question is, "Do you have the option of various confessors?" I actively try to avoid non-empathetic priests.
4935. I have had a consistent confessor. I think the consistency of that relationship is ideal. However, in the world of COVID, many parishes I know have modified how the sacrament is offered. For example, a parish close to me only offers confession in a large open "lower church" wherein, due to basement acoustics, the entirety of one's confession is easily heard. It's frustrating. Even though I live in a large diocese, policies like this make it difficult to access the sacrament, as does mask wearing. So I choose now to go to confession where I don't need a mask and can have privacy.
4936. I go to whoever I find when I want or need to go. I have had a few consistent confessors in the past that I liked, but they move around a lot. Also I serve on my parish council and work closely with my parish priests, so I'm not comfortable going to them. I realize they hear so many confessions and don't recall them, etc., but it matters to me; I'm more free talking with a priest I don't interact with much otherwise.
4937. I usually go to the same, but am not hesitant to use others.
4938. I go to whoever is there.
4939. I choose religious like Jesuits and Franciscans because of their compassion, attentive listening and advice.
4940. I go to whoever is hearing confessions because I am on a tight schedule and don't have the flexibility to go according to my preference of priests. However, I do have my favorites (and not-so-favorites)!
4941. It is difficult to find the same priest every time.
4942. I just go to anyone .
4943. I go to different priests, depending on need and schedule.
4944. I try to be consistent, but I always want to go during Lent and so will go to whoever.
4945. I go to whoever, but I have a preference for some priests based on a sense of personality and manner.

4946. Definitely prefer and seek out a consistent or at least known confessor. I find a personal relationship more conducive to a deeper and more honest experience.
4947. I would prefer a consistent confessor, but it isn't available at this time, so I go to whoever is hearing confessions. A consistent confessor can help in spiritual growth, and a different one can give a fresh perspective.
4948. I got to know my confessor too well (through working with him) and when he turned against me personally, I found it impossible to go to confession anymore.
4949. Any priest is fine.
4950. Usually I have a consistent confessor, my spiritual director, but will sporadically go to someone else.
4951. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. What matters is forgiveness from Christ, not the human being.
4952. I typically go to whoever is hearing confessions, though there are some confessors I like to go to with more regularity. I go to confession about every two weeks and whichever priest is hearing confessions that day is the one I go to.
4953. I go to whoever is hearing confessions because of my busy schedule.
4954. No, I do not have a consistent confessor -- I am a parishioner at a Jesuit parish so, I feel comfortable going to whoever is hearing confessions.
4955. I usually go to my pastor because I like him.
4956. I have a consistent confessor most of the time, but I go to whoever is available.
4957. Sometimes if I'm really ashamed, I go to a different parish.
4958. I just like to go to a church that has more than one priest hearing confessions so the lines go faster.
4959. I do try to go to a different priest and usually feel most uncomfortable going to my parish priest.
4960. I try to be consistent, so that the confessor can know me and make personalized penances or recommendations.
4961. I go to whatever location has availability. I prefer to not go to my parish.
4962. I like to confess to priests whom I don't know personally. I don't confess to my pastor because I talk to him every day.
4963. I prefer a regular confessor, but I feel since there are so few priests, I don't want to bother them.
4964. I have a regular confessor, mainly because once I have broken a confessor in, I don't want to break in another one too soon afterward.
4965. I go to whoever is hearing at a church nearby, but it is usually the same priest. It is not the church I usually attend.
4966. I prefer a consistent confessor when he is able also to give spiritual direction.
4967. I go to whoever is serving when I am in need.
4968. I usually go to a priest I don't know. I know that's not necessary but it helps me be less nervous.
4969. I do have a consistent confessor, my parish priest. I go to confession with him face-to-face. He has a great gift to say the words that I need to hear. He always commends me for seeking the sacrament and he reminds me of God's infinite love and mercy for me (and everyone). I also love that he gives me a scripture passage to pray with and meditate on.

4970. A consistent confessor is preferable when striving for an ongoing growth in any particular area or issue.
4971. I try to go to other parishes for confession as my priests know me very well.
4972. I go to random priests.
4973. I often like to go to a priest I don't know, but there are some priest friends I feel comfortable going to because I don't think they will hold my sins against me outside of the confessional.
4974. We are very fortunate to have four religious priests in our parish, and I tend to favor one or two over the others, but generally I go to whoever is available at the time. I figure that God may be leading me to a particular priest at the time because He knows it will be for my benefit.
4975. I used to go to whoever is available but then Jesus gave me a confessor to go to. There were a couple of times that I didn't want to go my confessor because I felt ashamed, so I would go to others. Jesus always came back to me and gave me strength, but I feel like the Holy Spirit always brings him to my mind when I need to go to confession and I also feel like the Holy Spirit desires that I be sanctified through the hands of this priest that Jesus gave me as a confessor.
4976. I go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4977. I have a consistent confessor since he is such a holy man.
4978. I go to whomever. Because I don't want to go to "the one I like."
4979. I choose to go outside my regular church.
4980. In today's life, everything is quickly done and on the go and drop in. If people have to wait, they often leave. Then they say to themselves, "Well it's between God and me anyway."
4981. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions.
4982. I try to go to my local parish. I've gone other places if needed, but I know my priests will offer solid advice.
4983. I go to whoever is available.
4984. I have a consistent confessor. He gets to know me and my issues and can then help me grow in holiness.
4985. My confessor transferred to a far-off diocese, the next one is retired, and now I hardly go. I don't think it's because of the priest. I love my pastor but feel somewhat intimidated by the thought of going to him for confession. I could go to a nearby parish but haven't.
4986. I never have the same confessor as finding the same priest each time is hard.
4987. If possible, I try to go to a consistent confessor because he knows my strengths and weaknesses. Someone who knows me can also help challenge me on the movement of the Spirit in my life.
4988. I choose based on convenience and availability first, but if the priest says weird hippy garbage I won't go back to him.
4989. I would if my normal confessor was closer. Right now I am bouncing around trying to find one that I am comfortable with.
4990. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions, but some I choose not to go to.
4991. I haven't found a confessor I would choose as a regular one, since a local retreat house closed.

4992. I go to whomever. Priests are not psychologists; they act in persona Christi. That said, there are some parishes I prefer, because you tend to get quality confessors.
4993. I go to someone who does not know me. I feel like I can open up more.
4994. I found a priest I really liked but it's hard for me to get to that church when life is so busy. To be honest I do pretty well going to different confessors because the vast majority of priests are really good at being a confessor,
4995. Usually I go to the same one mostly because I'm in a small parish with only one priest. But I like to go to him because he knows me and understands what I'm saying better than a stranger.
4996. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, because God has made the appointment for me.
4997. I just go the Franciscan confessor on duty. I like being able to go spontaneously to confession. And I think I'm afraid of telling my sins to someone who knows me.
4998. I go based on confession times and when I need confession, but I would like to have a regular confessor if possible one day.
4999. Every confessor is able to provide absolution. However, I try to go to someone that provides good advice.
5000. I go to random confessors.
5001. I have my own pastoral confessor and would never go to anyone else.
5002. Once I had gotten over my anxiety about confession I went to the same priest regularly for several years. He knew me well, he listened and encouraged. Since he died I have gone when on my annual retreat, or my annual working visit to Lourdes, but have hesitated to search out a priest at other times.
5003. I go to whoever is available
5004. I don't want to go to a priest I know.
5005. I try to go to a regular confessor but find myself going to whoever is available. I readily and shamefully avoid any priest who I am close to.
5006. Sometimes I go to someone I don't know for the sake of privacy with certain issues. But usually I go to our pastor or associate because they know me so well.
5007. I don't have any preference in the confessor. All priests have the knowledge to guide me.
5008. I go to whomever, at a nearby church (not my own) to avoid my own pastor. I am more comfortable with someone I don't know.
5009. I go to confession at the same church, but not my parish. I go there because their schedule of weekday, lunch hour, confessions is convenient and allows for fewer distractions than at my own parish.
5010. Preferably, I have a consistent confessor. The rapport helps to keep me accountable and I feel as if he understands more of my soul, my desires, my shortcomings, and my sins and is able to receive and respond more appropriately.
5011. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I'm a military member raised on military bases. We've moved a lot.
5012. I used to go to whomever, but since getting a spiritual director, I've gone to him. Since Christ is the one hearing my confession anyway, I should go with a priest who already knows me very well — even if it feels harder at times.

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5013. I have one regular one and another that I like to go to. The first one is my spiritual director. It is good to go to him because he knows me so well. The other is the pastor in my parish. He is excellent!
5014. I would prefer to go to a consistent confessor, but I've never had that kind of relationship where I've felt comfortable asking a specific priest.
5015. I prefer to have a consistent confessor if I find a good one. I work for the church and so I sometimes have to search for a confessor who is not a friend or whom I don't work with. When I have a consistent confessor I know what to expect.
5016. I go to who ever is hearing if I know I have fallen. I do this because I sense God is directing me to some one for some reason. Regularly I try to stay with someone consistent to help with progress or repeated issues. On occasion I will visit someone I know I do not know to ensure there is no temptation to water down what I confess.
5017. I usually do not have a preferred confessor; my choice is more about the times and availability of confessions being offered.
5018. I do not want to go to the priests in my parish. It is not helpful. It's crossing a boundary that complicates other dealings in the parish.
5019. I don't go regularly because it's only offered before the Saturday evening mass at my parish, which is right when I need to be making dinner for my family. My other option is by appointment, which is too formal feeling. When I do go, it's usually whoever happens to be there at one of the larger penitential services during Lent.
5020. I try to go to the priest who does not know me well.
5021. I go to a consistent confessor if I find one.
5022. I go to a consistent confessor, but sometimes I go to other priests too. I think it helps me as a Catholic to go to Confession regularly with the same confessor because he can help me identify areas I need to focus on to live a better life.
5023. I try to find a confessor whom I do not know well. I still carry the painful memories from younger days. So I just try to get through it.
5024. I would like to find someone I'm comfortable with and stick with them.
5025. I prefer anonymity. I don't trust confessing to a priest I know and interact with regularly. Maybe if past experiences had been less judgmental and condescending, I would feel differently.
5026. I go to whoever is in the box.
5027. I go to another parish than my own.
5028. I choose one I don't know on purpose. I usually go when they do the Reconciliation services with many priests.
5029. I typically go to confession monthly to my Spiritual Director but will go to others in between if needed. I do prefer going to a priest I know and with whom I have history. It's easier when he understands me as a person and knows what my strengths and weaknesses are and can offer a word or two of advice to keep me on the path toward God.
5030. I only go to priests I know and trust.
5031. Beggars can't be choosers. I go to whoever is hearing.
5032. I work in the church and I try not to go to priests I know or work with. Some have proved unworthy of trust.
5033. I usually just go whenever I have the chance, which is hard when you have lots of kids.

5034. Since my diocese frequently transfers our priests, choosing a consistent confessor is a bit difficult.
5035. I will go to whoever is there but I do enjoy going to someone who I've built a relationship with.
5036. I prefer confessing to a Jesuit.
5037. I had a regular confessor, but he is no longer close by and I am not comfortable with our current priests.
5038. I have my favorites, of course, but I'll go to any priest hearing confession. The sacrament matters more than the one administering it.
5039. I find a consistent confessor. That makes regular experiences of the sacrament better experiences. The continuity of working on ongoing trouble spots has been helpful to me.
5040. Our Priest has confession three times a week. He is great. I go to him a lot. But I would go to any priest.
5041. I do a combination of both. I'll go to whoever is hearing confessions but at times I may feel a need to go to a specific confessor.
5042. I prefer anonymity (behind the screen) or else go outside of home parish.
5043. I go to different priests if choices are available.
5044. I go to a regular confessor because I feel more comfortable and more inclined to take his counsel more seriously.
5045. Some Priest are better Confessors than others but that really isn't the point. I generally go to whoever is hearing.
5046. I go to whoever is hearing, have a volatile routine due to young children and health issues.
5047. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I try to avoid Priests I am friends with.
5048. I wish I had the strength of faith to have a consistent confessor. I go every month or two when and where it is most convenient.
5049. I go to whoever is hearing them, intentionally, because I don't want to manipulate the situation and hear from five people who say what I want to hear.
5050. It's nice going to our pastor consistently, but I have had wonderful experiences with visiting priests as well.
5051. I have favorites whom I know are holy priests who will make a concrete suggestion and not give me some light fluff penance.
5052. I try to go to a specific priest. He is able to give me good direction and keeps bringing back things to God's mercy. He also has been open about some struggles in his life and that makes me comfortable bringing things up. I appreciate that he makes sure I understand things too at the end.
5053. I go to whomever, but I don't go often. With the amount of work priests do, it's hard to actually have a confessor.
5054. I have one I like to go to. But if I really need to go, and I'm far away from my parish, then that will work.
5055. I like to be consistent and go to the same priest.
5056. I have a consistent confessor, because I am looking for guidance and ongoing discernment.
5057. I go to the same priest.

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5058. When I was in college, I had a consistent confessor, and it was wonderful. Now that I'm married and have a child, I don't, as I go whenever and wherever I get the chance.
5059. Convenience is main decider for me and so I go to whoever is hearing.
5060. I like to go to confession when out of town. I prefer new perspectives.
5061. I go to whoever is there.
5062. I'd like to have a consistent confessor who is my spiritual director, but it's difficult to find a priest willing to do either. So, most of the time, I choose to go to whoever is hearing confessions.
5063. I go to different priest, but I am very cognizant of who priest may be. I search for the one who seems most likely to listen and guide, not just judge and scold.
5064. I haven't gone more than once or twice a year to take advantage of a closer relationship with one priest.
5065. I go to whoever is available. It is nice when I get a certain priest at a certain church, but I usually don't have that luxury.
5066. I go to whomever.
5067. I prefer the priest who gives the best way of action. Most of the time it is difficult to coordinate with him.
5068. I go to confessors I'm acquainted with but would go to anyone.
5069. I go to a mall chapel because of the extended hours and ease of access to the Sacrament.
5070. I go to someone I know and who knows me.
5071. I usually go to a neighboring parish. Our parish only has face to face and I'm just not comfortable that way.
5072. I enjoy going to confession with certain priests, but I will go to just about anyone. Until recently, I was also a long-time employee as a teacher in my parish school. When we were assigned a new pastor, I no longer felt comfortable going to him (though I had not had that feeling with any previous priests or pastors at my church) as I felt my personal life would be judged and impact my career. Mind you, I am married with two children and live a life of faith, but I still felt very uneasy with this one particular priest.
5073. I prefer to go to the same confessor, but I would consider another if one were available when I am. I am most comfortable with my confessor whom I have known for 45 years.
5074. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions. This is because the school offers confessions for students every Wednesday during adoration. However, it is usually the same 2 priests.
5075. I prefer a consistent confessor.
5076. I never go to the same priest or church, if possible. I travel all over for confession. I even try to disguise my voice if I go back to the same priest. I know all about "in persona Christi," but he's human and so am I.
5077. I go to whoever is hearing, but I have favorites who I prefer
5078. I have had the same confessor for 20 years
5079. I usually choose a consistent confessor, because he knows me from going to Mass and volunteering. He gives me an easy penance. I will go to another priest when he is not available.

5080. I like to stick with the one I'm more familiar with because then he could inform me better and know more about where a habitual sin is coming from and what type of advice would be best for me.
5081. I have a few different priests that I try to stick with when it comes to confession. They know me, they know what I struggle with, and they're able to help guide me.
5082. I used to go to a regular confessor. He was kind and gave solid advice.
5083. I tend to prefer priests I don't know and who don't recognize me. The reason is mostly shame.
5084. I usually go to my pastor, because he always is willing to hear my confession when I ask, and he's always been quick to remind me of God's desire that I confess and receive His mercy.
5085. I really like to go outside my parish priest. My pastor knows too much about me already; He is a good confessor, but I do like to go to other priests as well.
5086. I have a regular confessor who is a compassionate guide
5087. There are limited choices due to our parish schedule and so I generally go to the same one.
5088. I do not have a consistent confessor because there are so many churches near me so I am able to go at whatever the best time is.
5089. I like going to a priest I know. I feel like he knows me and my problems, so I do not have to repeat myself. I do like on a rare occasion to talk to a different priest. Sometimes I like to hear a different take on things.
5090. I always check the schedule to see who would be hearing confessions, because there are some I prefer and some I don't.
5091. I consistently go to my parish priest because he offers confessions before every mass, which makes it highly available.
5092. I go to whoever is hearing. Most of the time, this has not been an issue.
5093. Since a bad experience, I have gone a couple of times to confession, with priest who don't know me and follow Vatican II.
5094. I go to whoever is there.
5095. I avoid priests who may know me. I am still dealing with shame and guilt.
5096. I like different priests as they provide different perspectives. It's also to avoid embarrassment. But I'll go with whoever is there. I just prefer priests I don't know.
5097. I go to whomever. I generally don't feel a connection to confessors. I would love a relationship with my confessor. They all seem distracted and so busy.
5098. We have moved a great deal as a family, so I've never had a confessor for very long. College is probably the last time I had a consistent confessor, but even then the campus didn't have the same priest for all four years. So in general, I go to whoever is hearing confession near me.
5099. Preferably I go to the same person, as they will eventually know more of my spiritual history.
5100. I have a favorite, and will adjust my schedule for him.
5101. I do want to confess in my parish. I have seen what happens to some staff I am lay, but that is a turn off.
5102. I often seek the same confessor but another will also serve the purpose!
5103. Depends where in the world I am. I have priests and churches I normally go to.
5104. I have a consistent confessor, whom I have learned to trust.

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5105. I prefer a consistent confessor but I will go to any priest for my confession if needed.
5106. I go to whomever. My schedule isn't consistent enough to do otherwise.
5107. There is a particular priest I go to when I can. He's a kind man who struggles quite a bit with physical ailments of his own, but always has a kind and cheery outlook on life. He reminds me at the end of confession how much God loves me, and twice has dropped what he was doing to hear my confession immediately. I was en route to the hospital for labor both times, and the second time, he came out of a meeting to hear my confession. I am so grateful!
5108. I go to whoever because I can't always get to the same parish or the same confession times.
5109. I choose the same confessors.
5110. I specifically go to a different parish .
5111. I go to my parish priest most often.
5112. I go to whoever, based on my busy schedule.
5113. I go to the person hearing confessions, but I certainly prefer some over others.
5114. I go based on convenience. I live across the street from a clustered parish. It's easy to pop over.
5115. I used to have a consistent confessor. He became controlling unfortunately. I no longer see him and choose to go to other priests anonymously.
5116. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. Confessions are not frequently available – most parishes have only one time per week – in our area; we hop around to whatever location we can get to. At the parish we attend most there is confession before and after mass but the line is typically quite long.
5117. I wish I had a spiritual director that is a confessor!
5118. I used not go to priests I was close to. Once I began to understand the beauty of the sacrament and desiring higher accountability, I began seeing a regular confessor.
5119. I go to no priest in particular.
5120. I try to stick with my pastor or assistant pastor but whenever available during missions and retreats I will confess.
5121. I have a consistent confessor. I know what expects me. Some priests are very restrictive and unfriendly. I don't go to them a second time. I am happy if I find someone with whom I can be comfortable.
5122. I have a consistent confessor. He is my spiritual Director.
5123. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. Making time for confession becomes difficult between work, family, travel, etc.
5124. I prefer a consistent confessor because he guides me into Jesus' Heart with his words and penance.
5125. I like a consistent confessor in general, but when there's a retreat or I'm visiting somewhere, I take advantage. Variety helps.
5126. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. Though my parish priest is the one who hears confessions most of the time.
5127. I go to a different confessor only if I'm travelling. I've had only one confessor I would not return to. Other than that I go to confession with same priest, because he knows me already and the things I struggle with.
5128. I have no preference.

5129. I have no choice but to choose different confessors. I haven't found a good one in many years.
5130. I go to whoever is there. But the first time I went to confession after a 30 year hiatus, I picked out a youngish priest based on a Sunday sermon in which his anecdote indicated that he was comfortable talking to women and interested in them as persons. I figured he was a good risk and would not be high-handed or bored or dismissive. I was right.
5131. I usually go to whoever is available at my parish.
5132. I am not keen on a priest seeing me face to face. I try to go to an unfamiliar priest behind the screen.
5133. We have a small church parish so we have only two options.
5134. We have a pastor and an associate. I generally prefer to see the pastor, so he can spot things that I may not recognize, but I do go to our associate pastor, as he is newly ordained, and may need some experience.
5135. I go to whoever is hearing confessions, but I typically go to the same church for confession.
5136. I like to be consistent, but I do go to a variety of priests.
5137. I live in remote rural area and I am leery of most of the clergy assigned here, though one of my pastors was quite good. Otherwise I went to a church two hours away.
5138. My pastor is an uninvolved confessor who gives no feed back, so I drive four hours to a church that has different confessors each day.
5139. I accept whoever is available, but I do not go to the priests where I live.
5140. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I am most comfortable when they don't know me.
5141. I go to whoever is hearing confessions. I have to work up courage to go to Confession due to difficult experiences, so I go when I have the courage.
5142. I go to different priests. Some day I would like a spiritual advisor or consistent confessor. I had one in the past, but right now with little kids I go wherever is most convenient.
5143. I go when the Church is open and someone is hearing confessions.
5144. I am physically disabled. Choice is a luxury for those who can stand and wait!
5145. Usually I go to the same one, for 25 years. We know each other, and I can talk to him.
5146. Priests are always changing, so I go to different ones.
5147. I had a confessor that knew of my tender conscience and worked with me. He lives far away now from me and I am scared to find another.
5148. I have a spiritual director now who also hears my confessions. I go to him because he knows me, knows where I struggle, and gives good advice. I do still go to other priests if he is not available.
5149. When possible, I like to go to the same confessor.
5150. I prefer a consistent confessor, so long as he is a good one. If he knows me better I believe that God can give him greater insight into my failings as a sinner. If I know him better, it is easier to know where he speaks wisdom.
5151. I'd like a consistent confessor but that seems like an extravagance to ask of a parish priest.
5152. I go to two different places, one (a parish not my own), is always the same confessor: he is wonderful and patient and often offers a good suggestion to keep me on the

straight and narrow. At the other place, a chapel, it is usually, but not always, the same priest. Whoever is hearing confessions there may make a comment (like telling me "good confession"), but offers no advice, just absolution and a penance, and sometimes he will reach around the screen to give a prayer card.

5153. I've always liked the idea of being able to go into a random confessional with a priest I've never seen before and will never see again, and I was able to do that as a teenager. I lived in a small town with only one priest, so I would wait until I was traveling to go to confession. But now, as an adult in my situation, I have to basically interview any priest before going in a confessional with him. I hate the reasons for that, but it has forced me to develop a real relationship with a confessor, and I think that's ultimately been good for me. It helps me be more accountable over time; it means the advice I get comes from someone who really knows the whole me; and it's been humbling to have that relationship with someone (my parish priest) whom I'm otherwise very invested in having a positive perception of me.
5154. With moving a lot, it's inconsistent. I'll try to go back to a priest I learned a lot from or whose homilies I enjoy.
5155. I go to different priests.
5156. I go to different priests because of scarcity. As a young person, I definitely choose to go to a different parish because we are well known and I am ashamed and embarrassed to have someone who knows my family know my disappointing behavior.
5157. When working through a particular difficult issue, I choose the same. Otherwise I take whoever is available.
5158. We go to confession at a different church than the one we regularly attend for Mass because it is closer to our house and the confession times were better for our schedule (and there is never a line).
5159. I only go to someone I know, who knows me and is willing to listen to me.
5160. Usually I go to the same ones, because their church had very convenient times before and after every Mass.
5161. I go to priests who don't know me. I am embarrassed because I don't think I confess well.
5162. I go to whoever is hearing confessions
5163. I go spontaneously, a few times a year, but I'd welcome a consistent confessor who also could provide sound advice for spiritual growth.
5164. I go wherever, depending on my schedule, but I'm thinking of changing that habit.
5165. Once in a while I go to the mystery man behind the screen, if I really feel I can't bring myself to say certain things to my regular confessor, who is also a friend. That's the conundrum with having a regular confessor: it's usually the one person in the faith community who you'd like to believe thinks well of you. Then you pour out all this ugly stuff about yourself, receive absolution, and then say "Well, bye-bye, Father, see you at the potluck!"
5166. I try to go to a priest who tries to understand me.
5167. Most of the time there is no option. It is the parish priest or nothing.
5168. I go to anyone I see as compassionate.
5169. If I am in my home parish, I am more likely to choose a consistent confessor, if I know the priest well.

5170. There is no consistent confessor available.
5171. I go to my Pastor or to a downtown shrine. I always felt better after seeing any of these priests.
5172. I go to whoever is hearing confession
5173. I try to let God lead me.
5174. I go to whoever doesn't know me!
5175. I prefer a consistent confessor when possible.
5176. Whoever is there is fine, but I like how the priests that I think do not have the warmest of personality turn out to be so kind and fatherly in the confessional. I also like to go to different parishes for confession.
5177. I usually go to the same priest.
5178. Usually I go to the same confessor so as to build relationship and trust.
5179. I go where confession is convenient timing wise and where I can have some anonymity. The timing piece is critical because I'm a parent with an active family. I have found weekday evenings during which the sacrament is consistently offered to be the best. Saturday mornings or afternoons are less helpful.
5180. I have never had a consistent confessor. I go to different parishes if possible.
5181. Usually there is only one priest available. If there is a communal reconciliation service, I select randomly, generally the one with the shortest line.
5182. I have lived in many places and go to whoever is hearing confessions
5183. Each time I choose a consistent confessor, he is transferred away. Currently we have only one priest.
5184. I'm sorry my spiritual director has retired and now lives far away. Now I go to my pastor.
5185. I do not choose a particular confessor necessarily.
5186. If I'm embarrassed by my sins, I will seek a priest that I don't usually go to confess.
5187. I would like to find a confessor I could go to most of the time
5188. I avoid priests I do not like or do not feel comfortable with. They may be excellent confessors, but I don't want to take the risk.
5189. I prefer a consistent confessor. But times are changing and it is more difficult than ever to have that level of support.
5190. At this point, I only go to priests I don't know in the hopes that they will be better than my parish priest.
5191. I go out of my way to find a church where I am not known. I like the feeling of anonymity. I live in a very small community where everyone knows everyone else, and I like to talk to someone who doesn't look at me with a preconceived notion of who I really am. I have several friends who feel the same way. This is particularly true in a small church community when the person confessing is also very active in the church.
5192. I usually choose the priest I have had the best experience with, the priest who gives good direction. Otherwise I will go to any priest.
5193. Usually I go to a consistent confessor if I have a choice because I know his demeanor. But I will go to whoever is hearing confessions.
5194. I prefer a consistent confessor if possible.
5195. I usually go to whoever is hearing confessions.

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5196. I go to whoever is hearing that day. It just works out best with my schedule and I'm quite shy around priests.
5197. I prefer a confessor who does not know me or who does not see me on a regular basis.
5198. I usually go on a regular basis to a national shrine nearby. Those priests are great as they hear so many confessions, especially of lapsed Catholics.
5199. I go to a consistent set of three confessors. This is mostly due to their availability and my schedule.
5200. I go to whoever is there.
5201. I prefer to go to my parish priest because he is our Shepherd who has been assigned to us.
5202. We change priests a lot so it's not easy to have consistency but I do prefer some over others. It can be strange as an older woman to confess to priests my son's age or younger.
5203. I go to whoever is available.
5204. I try to get to a visiting priest who comes often. He was a married man but after his wife died he went to seminary. I don't want to tell my regular pastor and affect his opinion of me when I am on multiple parish committees. He might think he would not want to depend on me or value my participation. My parish priest is aloof and a shy person with little eye contact and I look for eye contact.
5205. Fortunately, I am comfortable with all the priests in my Parish. When I was younger, no matter how grievous I thought my sins, I told myself, "What's a half hour of embarrassment compared to the uplifting joy that follows?"
5206. I go to whoever is available
5207. I look for someone whom I know to be is a spiritual person.
5208. I don't like the unusual penances so I usually go to a priest who does not get very creative. But I will go to any priest.
5209. I go to whoever is hearing confession.
5210. I try to go to a consistent confessor most of the time. He has a deep respect for Jesus and the sacrament of confession. He's a holy man.
5211. I choose a consistent confessor when I can because I'm most comfortable with him, but if he has too many people I don't mind going to someone else.

## **What qualities or virtues do you look for in a good confessor?**

- 5212. Someone who listens, has empathy and really cares, like Jesus himself.
- 5213. Discretion, calmness, humor, humility, gentleness, patience, piety.
- 5214. A good Listener. This might be my only contact with a priest.
- 5215. Unable to describe. It's a bond you feel.
- 5216. Gentle, patient, sincere, humble.
- 5217. Good listener, kind, caring, compassionate.
- 5218. Gentleness and healing.
- 5219. Understanding, gentle, logical, unassuming, practical.
- 5220. Someone who is spiritual as well as in touch with the world and his parishioners.
- 5221. Very good listener, someone who can give good guidance, kind. I think even being able to know a little bit about the priest as a person makes a big difference. But even if I am confessing with a priest I don't know, just hearing a kind voice really helps.
- 5222. Non-judgmental. Quiet. Knowledgeable.
- 5223. Kindness. Understanding of the challenges of lay life. A priest who engages in dialogue.
- 5224. A profound commitment to social justice, the profound truths of Vatican II, gratitude for Pope Francis, appreciation for the special burdens born by women and minority members in the Church, an ability to listen and hear what believers are actually experiencing.
- 5225. Empathy but directness. I want my confessor to have compassion. He should not bring more shame nor negate the seriousness of my offenses.
- 5226. The ability to really listen. Taking time to slowly and clearly speak the words of absolution.
- 5227. Loving advice.
- 5228. Lack of judgment, compassion, less criticism and more mercy.
- 5229. Good listener and advisor.
- 5230. Gentleness. Empathy.
- 5231. An engaged listener who does not minimize or make excuses for my sins. I don't need someone to beat me up over them but someone who allows me to accept accountability.
- 5232. Stoic but able to give concrete advice
- 5233. Compassion, good listening skills, ability to convey God's mercy and forgiveness.
- 5234. Someone who listens and is willing to engage in a conversation.
- 5235. Empathy grounded in faith and humility.
- 5236. Compassion, understanding, non-judgmental, a sense of humor.
- 5237. A man of virtue and faithful practice, one who lives his Catholic faith and is spiritually in tune with the Lord Jesus.
- 5238. One who is madly in love with Jesus.
- 5239. One who is compassionate and has the time to counsel the person in the confessional.
- 5240. A great listener. Patience and understanding go such a long way as well.
- 5241. Acceptance of the person, compassionate presence, prayerful lifestyle.
- 5242. A real listener. Someone with empathy and compassion.

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- 5243. Humility, sincerity, pastoral, patient, compassionate to all, and a sense of humor
- 5244. Empathy, knowledge, attunement.
- 5245. Listening, who can give advice, full hope.
- 5246. Loving shepherd. Understanding of human failures. Seeking to understand the challenges of married family life.
- 5247. Love of the Sacrament, compassion, respect for my concerns, who doesn't rush.
- 5248. One who is attentive to what you confess and who gives guidance.
- 5249. Patience, a good listener.
- 5250. Compassion.
- 5251. Honesty, pastoral understanding of human weakness, and the ability to communicate effectively.
- 5252. Mercy, understanding, consolidation.
- 5253. Understanding and compassion.
- 5254. Listening compassion, clarity, kindness, who doesn't argue my sins away.
- 5255. Anonymity.
- 5256. Calm, supportive, an ability to refrain from judgment, humility.
- 5257. Empathy.
- 5258. Thoughtfulness.
- 5259. Prayerful self-assurance.
- 5260. Good listener, nonjudgmental.
- 5261. Kindness, compassion, acceptance and evidence of being a good shepherd.
- 5262. Worldly, or at least an understanding or willingness to put himself in my situation and help me understand what led to the sin. Willingness to engage and ask questions and help me discover why I sinned in the first place Non-judgmental might sound obvious, but I have met priests before that are judgmental and I concluded I could never go to confession with them.
- 5263. Wisdom, deep understanding of psychology and mental health, a predisposition to wanting to be a priest with a servant heart.
- 5264. Empathy.
- 5265. Forgiveness, empathy, someone not obsessed with sexual sins and more concerned with sins against the poor, the environment, and the disenfranchised.
- 5266. Someone who listens and is open to the Holy Spirit.
- 5267. Someone who takes the time to connect, instruct, advise and counsel.
- 5268. Someone that is merciful and not condemning!!
- 5269. Some not full of himself.
- 5270. Listening. Authenticity.
- 5271. Understanding, patience, compassion.
- 5272. True ability to hear and see the penitent as God's beloved son or daughter, to receive the penitent in an unhurried manner, to focus on God's love.
- 5273. Friendly, empathy, listener.
- 5274. Kindness, patience, willingness to help me say things that might be difficult or embarrassing.
- 5275. Non-judgmental, not super conservative. Good attitude, wanting to talk to me, and, after listening to me, willing to talk about how I can improve.
- 5276. Someone who imitates Jesus Christ when a contrite sinner confesses to him. He needs to be caring compassionate, non-judgmental, forgiving, and merciful.

5277. One that has time, sometimes it feels rushed. I would ask that priests offer as much time for confession as they can in terms of opportunities to receive the Sacrament. I think of St. Padre Pio. His was truly special but he was willing to give his time so generously.
5278. Empathetic and a good listener.
5279. Patient, loving, compassionate, good listener, understanding, someone who preaches what he practices and treats the parishioners like he preaches we should treat each other.
5280. Insight, understanding, knowledge of Scripture, penances that are related to the matters discussed and confessed, a vulnerable, personal approach, emotional presence, compassionate and merciful, the courage to offer to touch my head during absolution. To experience the Face of Christ, through all of this.
5281. Good listening skills, empathetic not sympathetic, a person of high moral standing who is consistent and composed.
5282. Good listener.
5283. Compassionate, yet direct. Relatable.
5284. Listens non-judgmentally, has a pastoral heart, will genuinely try to give me advice to help me heal or reconcile with others. Also one who won't waste time telling me what I've confessed is sinful (I know this! That is why I'm there for confession!).
5285. Understanding, good listener, can further instruct me in my faith—or who can just listen and absolve. Either is fine.
5286. A 21<sup>st</sup>-century person, logical, caring, open, not paternalistic, not condescending.
5287. Compassion, humility, spiritual guidance.
5288. Compassion. Empathy. Mercy.
5289. Patience, creativity of the penance, relatability
5290. Patience, listening heart, supportive, gentle spirit, humble, sincere, and a person of prayer.
5291. I like someone who listens and who doesn't make excuses for me about my sins.
5292. Compassion, understanding, love, warmth. I look for them to be Christ-like in their love and mercy for us.
5293. Insight, wisdom, educated in mystics and saints.
5294. Compassionate, non-judgmental, warm, understanding
5295. Someone who doesn't rush, but brief enough if there's a long line that he considers those waiting, too. A good listener, not just going through the motions.
5296. Understanding. Compassion. Don't want or need a lecture to make me feel bad.
5297. Kindness, understanding, knowledgeable of the faith and circumstances, willingness to give counsel.
5298. Good sense of humor, compassionate with a good understanding of what sin is.
5299. Someone who is genuinely present.
5300. Compassionate, can listen and give penances that help me grow. Must be a person who prays.
5301. Understanding, non-judgmental, approachability, a gentle demeanor, kindness, warmth, Godliness.
5302. A devout priest.
5303. Understanding, nonjudgmental, encouraging, simple, kind, with a meaningful penance.
5304. Calm, patient, knowledgeable.
5305. Understanding, compassionate.

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- 5306. Compassion most of all. Humility. The understanding of when to speak and when to remain silent. Personal holiness.
- 5307. A listener, not a preacher. Someone with some psychology and counseling background.
- 5308. A good spiritual director, someone who listens and does not think of hearing confessions as a duty.
- 5309. Kindness.
- 5310. Calmness, good at expressing God's mercy, who instills hope that I can change ways, who educates me on the efficacy of the absolution.
- 5311. Someone who is listening, pays attention and has a conversation with you. Offers perspective. One of the best confessions I ever had, the Priest told me I was being too hard on myself. People going to confession are already feeling guilt, sadness, failure – that's part of the reason we go. We don't need it thrown back at us.
- 5312. Kindness and insight.
- 5313. Just be available. I know they have many responsibilities.
- 5314. Compassion, a desire to guide me spiritually and encourage good deeds.
- 5315. A smile. A person of understanding and compassion. Someone who places a scriptural reading in my head and heart.
- 5316. An empathic listener who provides some basic advice.
- 5317. A good listener. An honest counselor.
- 5318. Someone who listens and can convey a sense of peace and understanding.
- 5319. Merciful and compassionate.
- 5320. Warm, Kind.
- 5321. Listening, objectivity, understanding, consolation, advice on how to go on and solve a problem, according to the love of Jesus.
- 5322. Humility, compassion.
- 5323. I like it when a confessor personalizes each penance and doesn't give the same thing every time. I look for someone who is willing to ask questions or give guidance on overcoming repetitive sins.
- 5324. A good listener. Compassionate. The gift of wisdom.
- 5325. Patience, compassion, wisdom.
- 5326. I think they have to have humility if someone is to bare his or her sins to them. A kind spirit is helpful, too.
- 5327. Compassion.
- 5328. Compassion. Humility. Wisdom. An understanding that if someone is there at Confession, he is sorry and trying to do better and might need a hand with those first steps, rather than someone who harshly insists on perfection.
- 5329. Someone who is grounded in human reality and who knows that he, too, is a sinner.
- 5330. A quiet and prayerful attitude. A kind and loving demeanor. Deep desire to help the person feel the forgiveness of God. A desire to help the person move forward in his or her spiritual journey. Non-judgmental.
- 5331. One that cares about me not falling into repetitive situations through conversation, questions, and spiritual direction. Empathy, active listening.
- 5332. Kindness, patience, humility, wisdom, faith, hope, love.
- 5333. A holy disposition, but not a holier-than-thou attitude. Compassionate. One who understands the virtue of mercy and one who knows he too may need God's mercy, too.

- 5334. Compassion, intelligence, authority, patience.
- 5335. Clarity. Compassion. I appreciate being told what hard work I need to do.
- 5336. Warmth, understanding, not feeling rushed
- 5337. Be human and not judging, someone who recognizes himself as a sinner.
- 5338. Someone who will invest time, is mature, demonstrates wisdom, is genuine as a person and in his faith. Someone who actively listens, who has the capacity to be fully present. Someone who can hold space in such a way that it feels safe to face whatever needs to be said. Also someone who can make penance truly meaningful.
- 5339. A positive response to my attempt to grow closer to our Lord.
- 5340. Humility.
- 5341. Listener and advisor. Someone who cares.
- 5342. Good listening skills, a good advisor, understanding, kind and empathetic. Non-judgmental.
- 5343. A confessor who embodies mercy, spiritual inclusion and pragmatism, too. I appreciate confessors who remind me to forgive myself and move forward as God has forgiven me, too.
- 5344. Clarity, humility, and lack of judgmentalism. Bluntness but tenderness. A good confessor recognizes that he is a minister, not an arbiter of God's mercy and grace.
- 5345. Nonjudgmental, good advice, willing to engage in conversation. When we go to confession, perfect contrition is a gift but it's not enough. We need to feel the love of Christ. I'd also ask that confessors offer confession a lot. Not just Saturdays. Do it all of the time. We don't want appointments.
- 5346. Someone who genuinely feels the pain and anguish of a conflicted soul rather than just is preachy and judgmental.
- 5347. Someone who acts invested and not trying to get me out.
- 5348. Someone who understands family dynamics. Someone down to earth.
- 5349. Real patience and mercy. It would be hard to be that open in a face-to-face setting with someone I see impatient and lacking mercy around the parish or community at other times.
- 5350. Kindness, gentle, good listener, honest.
- 5351. Someone who is kind and honest and who offers some spiritual advice and a penance that matches the sin.
- 5352. Merciful and loving.
- 5353. A good listener.
- 5354. Good listener, discerning, patient, kind.
- 5355. Patience, kindness, understanding, gives good counsel.
- 5356. A strong believer in the truths of the faith, and who holds me accountable (albeit lovingly) for my failings. I don't appreciate those who seem to downplay what is truly wrong and sinful, as some have in my past. What I want is improved holiness and I need to be told the truth, according to our Lord and the Church.
- 5357. Good listener. Spiritual person.
- 5358. Someone who does not judge me. I already feel bad about my failings.
- 5359. Good listener, wise advisor, patient dispenser of caring advice, and prayerful companion.
- 5360. A priest who preaches what the Bible says, not the way he wants the Bible to be.
- 5361. An ability to "listen" to what is being stated; and to deal with "reality!"

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5362. Gentleness.
5363. A willingness to discern if I have suitable contrition and firm purpose of amendment and to deny me absolution if those were not present.
5364. An ability to listen beyond a litany of sins
5365. Compassionate, skilled at listening, not doctrinaire
5366. Kindness, thoughtfulness.
5367. Caring, kind-hearted, honest.
5368. Compassion.
5369. Attentiveness, gentleness, humility, the ability to see Christ in me beyond my self. The ability to listen without reaction, but with compassion and understanding. When I was starting, the ability to guide me through the process without making me feel as though I was getting something wrong. The ability to ask questions to help me discern. The ability for him to project his faith in the absolution he confers.
5370. Compassionate, non-judgmental, kind, but doesn't dismiss or minimize the sin.
5371. Compassionate, kind, offering counsel, giving penance that is actually contemplative versus just a rote prayer.
5372. A deep faith, a compassionate heart, an openness that reflects the mercy of Jesus.
5373. When he gives counsel, it feels like he cares. That's nice. It seems like Jesus would have cared.
5374. Compassion, honesty, a great listener, a strong sense of human nature, and a sense of humor would be nice.
5375. Is just as direct in identifying the sin and he is in sharing the message of hope and the good news.
5376. Empathy, good listener.
5377. Compassion.
5378. Holiness, seriousness.
5379. A willingness and the patience to hear what I'm saying. A broad worldview and an essential kindness. Someone who tries to emulate Jesus' compassion.
5380. Good listener – I mean not simply hearing what I am saying but truly listening to what I am saying. A priest who does not make you feel like it is just a production line – like "hurry up and hear as many Confessions as possible." Someone who is patient and understanding.
5381. Hopeful. Patient. Faithful. Prayerful.
5382. Nonjudgmental. Welcoming.
5383. Who will truly listen and give you a penance that hits at my sins.
5384. Someone who is not condescending yet helps one understand the conflict between what you have done and are confessing versus what is expected of you.
5385. One who knows God is working in my life and helps me to see this.
5386. Good listener. Non-judgmental. Patient. Compassionate.
5387. A good listener. Someone who cares. Someone who thinks outside the box.
5388. A priest who is available and is willing to have more than 30 minutes before Saturday Mass. To me that shows that he truly interested in saving souls.
5389. Someone who can listen through the hurt and shame to unpack what's really going on with the sin and sinner. Someone who is calm and gentle. It seems like we all think we're the worst sinners in the world. It's a good the priest who can help us understand that, yes, we are sinners, but we're sinners like all sinners throughout time.

- 5390. Someone who is inquisitive, encouraging, and challenging.
- 5391. Relatability, wisdom, understanding.
- 5392. A compassionate, good listener.
- 5393. Be available for confession. Twice-a-year availability doesn't cut it! Neither does 15 minutes before Mass. Sometimes it seems like we are bothering the confessor for the Sacrament.
- 5394. Open mind, non political. Someone who would not characterize the priests I knew in the 1960's and 1970's as errant.
- 5395. Kindness, some suggestions on how to improve myself.
- 5396. Someone who listens well and radiates the Lord's joy.
- 5397. Patience, listening skills, gives a thoughtful penance.
- 5398. When I feel bad about myself or something that I've done, someone who assures me that I'm not a bad person and gives suggestions on how to do better moving forward.
- 5399. One who listens and gives guidance.
- 5400. Good listener, patient.
- 5401. A good listener who isn't being judgmental.
- 5402. Patience, empathy, but still a father figure. He must be stern but still a compassionate man.
- 5403. Wisdom, patience, almost as a spiritual advisor.
- 5404. I want someone who loves God and me enough to tell me the truth not try to make excuses for my sins. I was struggling with a particular sin and a priest told me not to worry about it and to just do it. Not helpful when I knew what I was doing was wrong.
- 5405. Welcoming; someone who makes it more of a conversation.
- 5406. Kindness, compassion, guidance.
- 5407. Professional distance because I work for the diocese.
- 5408. One who has the courage to tell me the truth - not to sugarcoat sin.
- 5409. Intelligence, orthodoxy, professional attitude. I'm not looking for a friend or therapist.
- 5410. Holiness and humility. Humanity and a loving person.
- 5411. Patience, kindness, knowledge of how real life is.
- 5412. Patience, grace, kindness.
- 5413. Kindness, understanding, compassion.
- 5414. Listening. A gentle demeanor and manner. Tolerant of my nervousness. Pointing out the best saint to help me, if relevant. Intelligence.
- 5415. Honesty and not shy in giving a tough penance.
- 5416. The ability to listen with compassion, not leap to judgment
- 5417. Compassion. Kindness.
- 5418. Kindness.
- 5419. Understanding, loving, empathetic.
- 5420. Compassion, understanding, a true sense of granting the forgiveness our Lord grants us.
- 5421. Patient dialogue.
- 5422. Kindness, non-judgmental attitude, insightful
- 5423. Someone who is welcoming and kind. Someone who is a good listener and attentive to what I am saying, Someone who can teach as well as give penance. Someone who makes me feel comfortable and in the presence of God.
- 5424. Wisdom and holiness.

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- 5425. A short memory. Wisdom. Spirit-filled.
- 5426. A good listener. A kind and pleasant attitude. Supportive and understanding demeanor.
- 5427. Listening.
- 5428. Listening. Compassionate. Gives advice.
- 5429. Someone who listens and asks questions or comments on my confession. Who gives me direction and suggestions for overcoming my weaknesses.
- 5430. Someone who listens and maybe offers some advice on how I can do better.
- 5431. Kind, thoughtful, good listener, compassionate.
- 5432. Neutral, meek, kind, wise, with fervent faith and love for God.
- 5433. A good listener who is able to hear what is going on, and help me see it in a different way.
- 5434. Patience, humor, optimism, hope, kindness
- 5435. Solid faith, willing to ask questions, encouragement to ensure a good confession. Also one who gives an appropriate penance, not just three Hail Marys and sends you away.
- 5436. Kindness and wisdom.
- 5437. Maturity, wisdom, humility.
- 5438. Patient and happy to be there.
- 5439. Compassionate, good listener, makes concrete suggestions, gives a penance that is thoughtful
- 5440. Optimistic, caring, and a good listener.
- 5441. Holy. Faithful. Traditional.
- 5442. Kind. Understanding. Encouraging. Wise. Thoughtful. Engaging. Listens very well. Not judgmental.
- 5443. Good listener.
- 5444. Someone who provides clarity, compassionate and kind
- 5445. Calm, quiet, compassionate, caring and most of all human. If there is an air of aloofness or "holier than thou" attitude, that is likely to make me go elsewhere.
- 5446. A good listener that is merciful and provides some feedback on how to overcome or avoid a specific sin.
- 5447. He has to be living at least as good a life of discipleship as I am (really not interested in any life advice from someone whose life is worse than mine), be a good listener, be psychologically astute, be respectful rather than infantilizing toward laity, be prayerful, and be someone who participates in this sacrament as a penitent himself. There is no way to know whether a person has these virtues without knowing him pretty well, so ideally that would be the case.
- 5448. Caring, compassionate, honest, understanding, but who calls me out if I am trending in a bad direction. I like a well thought out penance, because it means he listened.
- 5449. Kindness, gentleness, love, and forgiveness.
- 5450. Patience, kindness, and guidance so I don't feel so embarrassed, and at a loss for words.
- 5451. Someone who makes follow up questions, helping me to understand the why behind my actions and to see any patterns.
- 5452. A good listener who acknowledges that I am human.
- 5453. Non-judgmental, empathic. compassionate
- 5454. Holiness, kindness, gives good advice on my sins.
- 5455. Orthodox!

- 5456. A listener.
- 5457. Patience, tolerance, empathy.
- 5458. Insight - being able to say something that goes beyond the absolution (even though I know that's the most important part).
- 5459. Good listener, who gives "real life" practical advice
- 5460. Imparts a penance that does not feel punitive but is also tailored (when possible) to what was confessed and is restorative.
- 5461. Genuineness, sincerity, compassion, understanding, a willingness to listen at length if needed. Humility.
- 5462. Patience, holiness, and fidelity to the Church's teaching.
- 5463. Compassionate and understanding.
- 5464. Patience, holiness, and fidelity to the Church's teaching.
- 5465. Patience. Calmness in voice or demeanor. A priest who makes you feel as though you aren't alone in sinning, and is "real." It's easier to confess in reconciliation to someone that doesn't seem in a hurry or uptight.
- 5466. Someone who offers advice.
- 5467. Someone who is pious - a good guy - someone who thinks like me.
- 5468. Listen. Don't judge. Compliment.
- 5469. Calm demeanor, good listener, ask appropriate (not invasive) questions.
- 5470. Kindness, brevity, caring.
- 5471. A kind person who accepts where I am coming from and would help me learn what God wants from me.
- 5472. A sense of humor, a grace-filled person, a very good listener, who maybe suggest books or readings instead of prayers.
- 5473. Humor, compassion, love.
- 5474. Kindness and compassion.
- 5475. Wisdom, kindness, deep personal spirituality, and a man of prayer.
- 5476. Understanding and compassionate.
- 5477. Patience, spirituality, a good listener, non-judgmental.
- 5478. Welcoming, a good listener, ability to encourage a conversation or exploration, a good teacher, and forgiving.
- 5479. Prudence, kindness and compassion, fortitude.
- 5480. Prayerful, open, challenging in a good way to love God more.
- 5481. Kind, helpful.
- 5482. Candor and kindness, focused on giving forgiveness and absolution.
- 5483. Kindness, patience, non-judgmental attitude, a sense of humor and openness.
- 5484. A pastoral approach, grounded in the messy reality of life, with the ability to communicate mercy and forgiveness and to encourage letting go of harsh self-judgment, without being dismissive about sin itself. Ideally, the confessor should be able to give a penance that is restorative - that is, that helps the person work toward repairing any hurt that may have been caused to relationships or people, while making it clear that it is not a matter of "earning" God's forgiveness.
- 5485. Someone who can look at you and not make you feel uncomfortable. A good listener who advises you with his wisdom and prayers. One that keeps the sacrament holy by not turning it into a therapy session. I am there for forgiveness and understanding. A penance that will help me correct my sins. Sometimes who gives healing words, like

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“we are all sinners” and “remember Jesus already has suffered for your sins, try to forgive yourself. Go in Peace.”

- 5486. One who engages in open dialogue.
- 5487. Attentive listening, who asks questions to understand the penitent.
- 5488. A priest who is prayerful, patient, faithful and can offer good insight.
- 5489. Compassion and mercy, empathy. Someone who truly wants to help me on my journey with the Lord and thinks I am worth the effort.
- 5490. The ability to build me up and help me develop my potential through the grace and love of God rather than simply point out abstract teachings of the church.
- 5491. A priest who prays, who listens, who lets the Holy Spirit guide him.
- 5492. Kindness.
- 5493. Someone who cares about repentance and the holiness of God, listens, gives trustworthy counsel, and doesn't rush.
- 5494. Someone who takes my sins seriously and gives direction, not one who minimizes the sin.
- 5495. Someone who helps me leave in peace and “feel” the real presence of God's mercy and forgiveness.
- 5496. Non-judgmental
- 5497. Listener, authenticity, knowledge, warmth, able to handle certain sins of our time where you don't feel embarrassed confessing or judged harshly.
- 5498. Someone who is friendly, down to earth and a good priest.
- 5499. Gentleness, compassion, kindness, empathy.
- 5500. Some who listens and asks relevant questions.
- 5501. Broad-minded and non-punitive in approach.
- 5502. Humility. Compassion. Love. Empathy. Knowledge to guide.
- 5503. Humor. Good listening skills. Compassion.
- 5504. Kindness.
- 5505. Compassionate, patient, good listener.
- 5506. Someone who is pastoral and merciful. Someone who truly listens and speaks from the soul. Someone whom I can truly see acting in persona Christi.
- 5507. A good listener but one who gives me advice.
- 5508. Listening, engaged, present, caring, and provides tissues, because I usually cry during my reconciliation.
- 5509. Compassionate, prayerful. Not too restrictive and functional, but pastoral listening to me where the Holy Spirit leads them and who helps me sense the Holy Spirit's movement as we talk.
- 5510. Openness, non-judgmental, spiritual, a representative of the "Good Shepherd," optimistic.
- 5511. Someone with empathy who would allow me to take my time saying what I need to. Someone who permits you to go face to face, not in a confessional.
- 5512. Holiness - but the every day sort. Not a piety that separates. Knowledge of Scripture. Compassion. Willingness to trust the conscience formation of the person confessing. Openness and humility. Someone who loves like Jesus.
- 5513. Kindness and understanding.
- 5514. Understanding and mercy.

- 5515. Someone who is pastoral and merciful. Someone who truly listens and speaks from the heart. Someone who I can truly see acting in persona Christi.
- 5516. Someone who is patient, understanding.
- 5517. Really listens and gives good advice if asked.
- 5518. Humble, respectful, listening and with a gentle way of asking clarifying questions.
- 5519. Kindness, patience, reassurance.
- 5520. A priest I trust, but if I don't know him I would like him to be upbeat.
- 5521. Kindness. Thoughtfulness. Wisdom. A deep, personal faith in Christ.
- 5522. Compassion, advocacy, direction for doing better.
- 5523. Someone who truly meets you where you are in your faith journey and does not judge the depth of your belief when you express doubts or questions. Someone who does not see church teachings in total black and white, binary linear thinking.
- 5524. Compassion, advocacy, direction for doing better.
- 5525. Understanding, dialogue, humanity.
- 5526. Someone who listens deeply with his heart.
- 5527. Good listener, helpful, encouraging.
- 5528. A priest who listens with his heart versus following a ritual book in front of him! A priest who is open and welcoming to those who come to Confession. A good educator too! Most Catholics don't understand our faith!
- 5529. Listening, not overly authoritarian.
- 5530. A good listener, takes time with me, encourages me, and suggests concrete ways to improve.
- 5531. A good listener, kind demeanor, like an understanding father.
- 5532. Understanding and caring.
- 5533. Good listener. Knows how to pray with another in a one-on-one situation. Understands confession as a liturgy that is about God's goodness.
- 5534. Loving, accepting, kind and gentle
- 5535. Humble.
- 5536. Kindness, mercy, a sense of how to not keep repeating, a good box of tissues
- 5537. A good listener, compassionate, not condemning.
- 5538. Good listener. The ability to know where to differentiate between spiritual guidance and mental health service and not to try to do both.
- 5539. Empathy, patience, understanding.
- 5540. Listener, relates penance to me and my reason for being there, treats me as an equal human and Christian.
- 5541. Kindness, understanding of sin and grace. He takes venial sin seriously since we are called to be saints, but also keeps it in its place. He has a commitment to his own spiritual growth (which leads him not to be okay with complacency in me), prudence, patience, a sense of humor, and obviously prayerfulness and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- 5542. Good respectful listening who asks gently for clarification. Deep respect for me as a penitent.
- 5543. Someone who listens! Who takes some time for at least a brief conversation. Who is truthful about sin and personal responsibility without guilt tripping, belittling or finger-wagging. People know they did something wrong; that's why they're there.
- 5544. Insight.

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- 5545. Compassion, good advice, educational background in human behavior or psychology, unbiased
- 5546. Pastoral, good listener and reflector, oriented to atonement with self, God, and others.
- 5547. Patient. Calm. Open. Kind. Thoughtful. Empathetic.
- 5548. Compassion, good listener, non-judgmental.
- 5549. I want to know him as a holy man.
- 5550. Compassion and honesty.
- 5551. Warmth, approachable, friendly at Mass.
- 5552. Someone who is able to be compassionate without downplaying the severity of sins.
- 5553. A listener.
- 5554. Good listener, nonjudgmental, comforting.
- 5555. Humble, kind, caring. I've been around too many priests who think they are holy and above reproach.
- 5556. Patient, kind.
- 5557. A caring voice.
- 5558. Good listener, merciful, kind, Christ-like, attentive, heartfelt, good counselor, challenges one to think in new ways, inspirational, motivational, holy, light-hearted, loving, gentle, honest, speaks the truth in love, can help uncover blind spots, makes me feel at ease and welcomed and special, honored, respected with human dignity.
- 5559. The willingness to offer a few words other than absolution and penance.
- 5560. Compassion, care, understanding, a willingness to help, proactive.
- 5561. Humility, faithfulness, reverence when celebrating Mass, seeing him live out his priestly vocation outside of church, and especially knowing he is a sinner like me and no judging me.
- 5562. Good listener. Brief, warm, wise. bit o' wisdom.
- 5563. One that helps me the exchange of my sins for mercy, who helps me feel I am forgiven!
- 5564. Someone who doesn't project judgment.
- 5565. Listen, not judge.
- 5566. Being cognizant of the difficulties of life.
- 5567. Wisdom, compassion.
- 5568. Wisdom. More emphasis on the psychological and other causes of the sin, as opposed to prayers, theology or Bible verses. I know a good bit of theology and the Bible, and they might remind me when I am wrong, but they do not help me reform my life.
- 5569. Listens and is able to respond appropriately.
- 5570. Welcoming, compassionate, understanding.
- 5571. Good listening skills. Kind. I don't really want advice in the confessional.
- 5572. Compassion, kindness, consistent referrals to Jesus with good Scriptural referencing!
- 5573. Someone who does not focus on birth control more than blasphemy.
- 5574. Approachable. A personable priest that puts me at ease is best.
- 5575. Someone who can listen with an open and nonjudgmental heart.
- 5576. Brief and kind.
- 5577. Kindness, engaged, lack of judgment
- 5578. Ability to serve as a spiritual companion. Humility.
- 5579. Kindness. Gentleness. Compassion. Not severe but merciful.
- 5580. A decent non-judgmental human being.
- 5581. Compassionate, knowledgeable, helpful. Calm. Of course discrete.

- 5582. A good listener and patient.
- 5583. One that can give advice in stead of simply asking whether we're sorry for our sins and giving absolution.
- 5584. First he must listen.
- 5585. Compassion, understanding, life experience.
- 5586. Patience, kindness, gentleness, and a priest who is much like Christ.
- 5587. Mercy over judgment, a sense of empathy and compassion, and the realization that they are sinners too!
- 5588. Open minded, compassionate, engaged
- 5589. Intelligent. A good listener. Able to articulate church teaching if I am in doubt. Open-minded enough to recognize primacy of conscience when he sees it! Encouraging.
- 5590. A disposition of cheerfulness and joy.
- 5591. Openness, compassion, good listener, one who is genuinely interested in the person in front of him.
- 5592. A nonjudgmental tender
- 5593. Relatability, perceptive questions, gentle encouragement, penance that fits the circumstances and helps me be a better person, rather than something rote.
- 5594. One who can provide a real understanding of the human person's failures and what is confessed.
- 5595. An understanding of human life.
- 5596. Someone who sees the good in me despite sin.
- 5597. Empathy.
- 5598. Compassion, mentorship, guidance.
- 5599. Kind.
- 5600. Someone who listens and gives counsel.
- 5601. Listening skills, empathy.
- 5602. Good listener.
- 5603. Attentive, kind, nonjudgmental, willing to probe and ask questions.
- 5604. Patience. Non-judgmental. Uses confession as a gentle teaching moment to help me grow in my faith.
- 5605. Sincerity, sorrow for sins (failure to love), desire to grow (conversion), meaningful penance.
- 5606. Compassion, interest in advising me, in having a real conversation.
- 5607. I look for a priest who is faithful to church teaching and who will challenge me in a loving way to amend my life.
- 5608. Good listener, compassionate, just, challenging.
- 5609. Knows how to listen empathetically, has an open mind, heart and spirit.
- 5610. Diversity of experience in confessors.
- 5611. Mercy, warmth, who doesn't try to impose his own beliefs.
- 5612. One who listens and helps you learn how you can change.
- 5613. Listening.
- 5614. For him to have a deep spiritual life, wisdom, a non-judgmental attitude, and to be guided by God's love in his words and actions.
- 5615. Good listener. Humble.
- 5616. Patience, kindness, directness, and the ability to say things that help me to change for the better.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 5617. Prayerfulness, kindness, patience, familiar with current trends, spiritual.
- 5618. A good listener. Empathy. Compassion. Understanding. Wisdom. The ability to share the Holy Spirit and God's grace.
- 5619. Quiet, understanding, a representative of God, not my parents.
- 5620. Understanding. Gives good advice. Answers questions. Helps me confront my fears. Prayerful.
- 5621. Guidance.
- 5622. Refrains from a judgmental tone and voice, hears behind screen.
- 5623. Is like Jesus.
- 5624. Understanding and kind.
- 5625. A kind man who listens.
- 5626. A good listener who gives feedback to the penitent. The ability to give a meaningful penance, related to the sin confessed. The ability to recognize mental illness and suggest the penitent contact a psychologist or a psychiatrist for treatment.
- 5627. Great capacity to listen, non-judgmental, not condemning.
- 5628. Listens, if appropriate briefly says something helpful, and gives penance and absolution.
- 5629. Worldly wisdom and realism.
- 5630. Honesty, openness and acceptance.
- 5631. Empathy, understanding, someone that you know loves the priesthood and is a good counselor....
- 5632. Kindness and empathetic, inclusive and open minded, who can give direction and advice if needed.
- 5633. Wisdom.
- 5634. Understanding, desire for the good of my soul but without any presumption.
- 5635. Listening, non-judgmental, wise, with some sense of the realities of lay life.
- 5636. A priest who listens, who is kind and understands the complexity of the world we live in, who gives hope and reassurance, who makes me love God and makes me feel God loves me.
- 5637. Someone who excels in the art of forgiving.
- 5638. Someone who understands addiction, anxiety, and other forms of mental illness.
- 5639. Someone who understands confession is an incredibly important part of their priesthood.
- 5640. Someone who has a well developed spiritual life and humble nature.
- 5641. Someone who asks questions about my spiritual journey.
- 5642. Listening. Humility. Kindness.
- 5643. Someone who is actively listening. Someone who acknowledges the seriousness of a sin that's serious to me even if it's not a huge big deal in the eyes of the church and isn't hurtful to other people.
- 5644. A loving heart.
- 5645. A good listener, who holds you lovingly accountable, and gives an appropriate penance.
- 5646. Listening, gives a meaningful penance.
- 5647. Gentle voice of tone. Encourages people to know God's embrace
- 5648. Positivity.
- 5649. Non-judgmental, someone who accompanies.

5650. Humility. Kindness.
5651. Compassion, acceptance and selflessness.
5652. One who can suggest ways I can do better.
5653. Empathy, listening ability.
5654. Patience, understanding, welcoming, certainly a great listener.
5655. Great listener, someone who dedicates hours per week in the confessional, someone who can relate Catholic teaching and Scripture to the difficulties at hand.
5656. Good listener, empathetic, caring, good advisor.
5657. Loving, who responds as you'd expect from a father who desired your return home.
5658. Patient, good listener, able to take my sins seriously, but also able to look at the positives.
5659. Honesty.
5660. Someone who stresses God's mercy and love above all other things. Someone who actively listens and gives meaningful penance rather than rote prayers to rattle off right afterwards (unless I'm given direction for those prayers).
5661. Have time to offer reassurance and guidance.
5662. Compassion.
5663. Empathy, objectivity, some understanding of day-to-day life of a wife and mother. As Pope Francis says, "A shepherd should smell like his sheep."
5664. Good listener, kindness, patience and a desire for me to know a loving and merciful God.
5665. Advice if I am having a particular problem.
5666. Asks questions to identify sins that I may have forgotten or did not know were sins.
5667. One who is patient and orthodox.
5668. Kindness, empathy, good listener, people person.
5669. Listens, acknowledges.
5670. A good listener. Someone who is compassionate and who understands human weakness.
5671. Someone who listens intently and is compassionate in granting absolution.
5672. Compassionate, who listens with his ears, heart and soul.
5673. Empathy.
5674. Patience, understanding. Who appreciates the courage it takes to return to confession.
5675. Someone who listens, does not rush me, and who speaks comfort of God's forgiveness.
5676. Humility, humility and humility. Sees God in me and lets God shine through them.
5677. Someone who listens, makes suggestions, offers advice, and who doesn't make you feel like it is routine or that he isn't really listening.
5678. A compassionate tone that doesn't treat the sacrament as a chore. Dialogue to feed me spiritually so I can forgive myself.
5679. A priest who listens and provides some basic guidance.
5680. Keeps it short and simple, and isn't judgmental.
5681. Someone who is kind, and truly delves into the sin that I confess, who asks why I did something, who looks for other ways to respond to a situation, not brushing the sin off and just saying "don't do it again."
5682. Non-heretical. Orthodox. Gives solid advice actually grounded in the Church's teaching.
5683. Must be a good listener. Dress or robed as a priest with a stole.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 5684. Open-mindedness while shaping confession into a deeper Spiritual purpose.
- 5685. Humble. Good listener. Doesn't talk a lot. Who doesn't presume every penitent's situation is the same. Who honors the courage penitents have in coming.
- 5686. Gentle but firm. Not permissive.
- 5687. Some open to all, gentle and respectful.
- 5688. Someone who doesn't interrupt with questions, who allows me to accuse myself rather than paraphrasing why what I've confessed is sinful. .
- 5689. Wisdom, and sympathy. I want to know I am forgiven and how to fix my problems.
- 5690. Empathy. Good listener. Calm approach. Not rushed. Responds like a friend walking alongside you in the struggle.
- 5691. Humility.
- 5692. A positive response to the person asking for healing, like the father of the prodigal son.
- 5693. Patient, accepting, good listener, someone who responds to your situation.
- 5694. Kindness, patience.
- 5695. Merciful, keeps his advice short rather than rambling.
- 5696. Relatability, honesty, a measure of challenge, a deep knowledge of scripture as well as human tendencies.
- 5697. Patience, compassion, a realistic outlook on how lay people's lives differ from that of most clergy, robust knowledge of theology.
- 5698. Compassion, grace, mercy, love.
- 5699. Humility, patience, understanding, wisdom.
- 5700. Kindness, words of wisdom.
- 5701. Someone who engages in conversation and offers pastoral advice.
- 5702. Gentleness and understanding, but not so relaxed as to wave away every sin like it's nothing. One who can empathize without trivializing.
- 5703. Warm, understanding, empathetic, wise.
- 5704. Someone who understands me as a human person as opposed to just a flawed soul.
- 5705. A good listener. Educated on Church teachings. Able to provide spiritual guidance in difficult matters. Able to handle difficult questions.
- 5706. Compassionate, earnest listener.
- 5707. Listens and engages.
- 5708. Compassion, love.
- 5709. Kindness, compassion, understanding.
- 5710. Good listener, Good communicator, Good advice giver.
- 5711. Mercy. Kindness. Compassion. Understanding. Attentive Listening. Walking with me as I undergo my journey.
- 5712. Patience, an ability to relate to my personal struggles.
- 5713. One who listens and doesn't make me feel judged. Who doesn't make me feel bad about not going more than I do rather than rejoices that I've come.
- 5714. Total attentiveness.
- 5715. Someone who is gentle.
- 5716. Good listener, one who will help and challenge me.
- 5717. Empathy, a true listener; who applies penances that fits the sins.
- 5718. Patience, interest and concern for who and how I am in that moment, a good understanding of God's justice and His mercy.
- 5719. Good listening skills, empathy, life experience.

- 5720. Empathetic, non-judgmental, welcoming, humble.
- 5721. One who listens, consoles, offers constructive advice, and demonstrates that God is merciful, rather than “by the book” giving seemingly prescribed penances, who is not a vengeful and severe judge.
- 5722. Someone who can lead a guided conversation.
- 5723. Genuine kindness and interest in what I’m saying, who gives practical down-to-Earth advice on how to grow in holiness, who exudes honesty and frankness.
- 5724. Compassionate and orthodox at the same time.
- 5725. Someone who is interested in giving guidance and helping develop my spiritual life.
- 5726. A compassionate, attentive listener. I also appreciate when the penance is something more specific to the situation (like working on a broken relationship) rather than just saying a list of prayers.
- 5727. Patient, interested, even if they’ve heard it a million times, and who challenges me toward becoming a more faithful person.
- 5728. Patience.
- 5729. Empathetic listening.
- 5730. A calm, nonjudgmental demeanor is a must. A sense of humor doesn’t hurt, either. The best confessors are happy to offer advice as well as absolution.
- 5731. A good listener and compassionate responder.
- 5732. I have found my best confessors are priests whose wisdom on display in homilies resonates with me. Even when a specific confession experiences are a bit lacking in terms of the counsel I was looking for, the bond from their homilies and other ministries reminds me of my affection for them and helps me understand their circumstances on a given day.
- 5733. Compassion and empathy. Gentleness. Who recognizes we are all in need of God's mercy.
- 5734. Wisdom, understanding, humanity, holiness.
- 5735. Gentleness combined with clarity and spiritual depth.
- 5736. Someone who doesn't get angry if I don't know the right words to say.
- 5737. Someone kind, gentle, pastoral, and very humble. I understand maintaining an era of virtue, but if I'm going to confess the worst things about me, I would like to be able to do it with someone who I know knows he is not perfect.
- 5738. Compassion and life experience. Who knows how to help people at their lowest who confess things that they can’t even say out loud.
- 5739. Compassionate, loving, understanding and not judgmental. Someone who gives good advice based on my personal confession.
- 5740. A priest who has empathy, listens and isn't dismissive of my problems.
- 5741. Someone who listens, without condemning, but also without minimizing. Someone who has a solid prayer life, and knows the struggles to live a life of virtue.
- 5742. Compassion. Listening.
- 5743. Someone who is not judgmental.
- 5744. Able to listen and not offer pat answers. Updated theology and has read recent encyclicals.
- 5745. Kindness, wisdom, understanding, empathy.
- 5746. Wise counsel, encouragement, compassion.
- 5747. Listening and compassionate.

*Merciful Like the Father*

5748. Someone who does what the Church asks in the sacrament. A confessor who also makes frequent use of the sacrament.
5749. A listener who let's me do the talking, who can ask appropriate questions, who can and does assure me that God loves me and forgives my sins.
5750. Compassionate, understanding, and has a sense of humor.
5751. Someone secure in his own relationship with Christ who understands that faith is life giving and who wants to listen.
5752. Compassion, wisdom, practicality, nonjudgmental.
5753. Patient, listens, responds with something brief but relevant, who has peaceful tone.
5754. Good listener, asks gentle and pertinent questions to help me along, who makes concrete suggestions of how to work on problem areas perhaps, who is calm, caring, gentle, with a bit of humor.
5755. Holiness, charity, kindness, love, strength, and a willingness to say even hard things.
5756. Loves the faith, is willing to hold me accountable and can ask or say the hard things.
5757. Someone who loves and lives Vatican II.
5758. Willing to talk and not rush you; kindness and empathy.
5759. Someone whose homilies I have listened to and feel they have compassion.
5760. Empathy. Tenderness. Authenticity. Being in touch with how lay people live and what family life is like. Encouraging and welcoming.
5761. Understandable, especially in their words.
5762. Humility, compassion, empathy, knowledge of the Scriptures, who takes everyone seriously.
5763. Empathy.
5764. A compassionate heart, clarity of thought.
5765. Patience, empathy, a merciful heart and compassion.
5766. A person who has lived and cared for people enough to know we are all loved by God.
5767. Patience and understanding.
5768. Kindness.
5769. Friendly, understanding, non-judgmental towards women.
5770. Empathy and understanding.
5771. A confessor who is understanding but also challenging, who helps me get a clearer picture of what's going on inside.
5772. Patience and good counsel.
5773. Someone who understands human struggles, is holy, and who challenges us to live better lives and seek holiness.
5774. Someone who has a close relationship with Jesus and has the ability to listen.
5775. Someone who draws people into the confessional by his preaching: if he presents well with detail then that makes me feel more comfortable going to him.
5776. Someone who is willing to dialogue a little and offer insight, who is not afraid to give a hearty penance.
5777. Relatable,
5778. A listener, warm in tone of voice, clear in speech.
5779. Someone who takes the time to offer advice or spiritual direction.
5780. Patient, kind, understanding, yet will tell you the things you need to work on.
5781. Can listen and counsel.

5782. Someone who listens, tells the truth, isn't afraid to address topics, and who assures me of God's love all the same.
5783. A man in but not of the world, who is holy but not holier than thou.
5784. Holiness, not afraid to acknowledge sin but give counsel for moving forward, warmth.
5785. Understanding, a good listener and forgiving.
5786. Kind with a deep love for his priesthood.
5787. Kind, gentle, encouraging, insightful, a good listener, who speaks boldly about the need for repentance but more so about God's mercy.
5788. Someone who genuinely cares for my soul.
5789. Good listener, trustworthy.
5790. One who has compassion for those who fall short of their catholic obligations.
5791. Someone who can give insight into living daily life closer to the Gospel.
5792. An outwardly joyful spirit and love for the Lord. Discerning in asking for clarifications.
5793. A listener, someone who is in touch with the real world, and real world problems.
5794. An intellect tempered with common sense; gentleness tempered with firmness; knowledge tempered with wisdom; who is able to articulate himself succinctly because of the lines of those waiting.
5795. Kindness and compassion. And someone who is deep in prayer so that Jesus can more easily work through them
5796. Holiness, virtue, compassion, mercy, good listener, truly interested, takes time, is available.
5797. Kindness, gentleness and a non-intimidating personality.
5798. Someone who lets me talk, gives me advice, treats me with kindness and helps me to find God's will.
5799. Spiritually insightful. Willing to challenge the penitent. Virtuous.
5800. A calming presence filled with the peace of Christ.
5801. A good listener who gives wise and compassionate advice.
5802. Gentleness. Relational. Understanding.
5803. The confessor should be "humble" and should not give a one-size-fits-all direction or penance.
5804. Someone who understands that I am a sinner and empathizes with me when I confess another round of failures.
5805. Calm, good listener, encouraging, who provides good Biblical advice and practical suggestions for change.
5806. Empathy, compassion, encouragement and the ability to listen and ask appropriate questions when needed.
5807. A good listener. Patient. Understanding Caring. Loving.
5808. Empathy and compassion. Wisdom, non-judgmental.
5809. Patient, great listening skills, withholds judgment.
5810. Good Listener. Good counselor.
5811. Humility.
5812. Someone who is docile to the Holy Spirit.
5813. A good listener and conversationalist.
5814. Kind heart, humble and compassionate.
5815. A good listener, who projects a desire to help the penitent grow spiritually, who doesn't rush the confession.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 5816. Human understanding.
- 5817. Someone who listens.
- 5818. Patience, holy, a good spiritual director.
- 5819. Someone who listens carefully and asks questions for better understanding of what is said and someone who is deeply spiritual in his advice to me.
- 5820. Guidance, wisdom and compassion.
- 5821. Awake, speaks English well.
- 5822. Merciful. I'm extremely hard on myself, but sometimes I can remind myself that I am my own worst critic. I look for a priest who will confirm that God loves me more than I do. I avoid priests who are likely to confirm all the terrible things I think about myself.
- 5823. One who will place an emphasis on the importance of this most Holy Sacrament, making it a priority and available. A good confessor listens, is compassionate, gentle yet corrective when needed. Just like our Lord.
- 5824. I seek a confessor who reminds me that it's okay that we are all broken while also challenging me to align more fully with divine will and a saintly life. One who creates a non-judgmental place to expose my deepest flaws and learn from 2000 years of history how to grow beyond weakness to sainthood.
- 5825. Someone who will help through advice and love.
- 5826. Honest and straightforward, someone who not only seeks to give absolution but also to help me in my struggle.
- 5827. Attentiveness, compassion and who gives good feedback.
- 5828. Love, peace and understanding without harsh reasoning, encouraging, helpful in avoiding near occasions.
- 5829. Intelligent and capable of conveying their intelligence without judgment, not "talking down" to me like I'm an idiot.
- 5830. Compassion.
- 5831. A Priest who is humble, charitable, and asks questions about what needs to be fulfilled for a good confession.
- 5832. Encouraging and personable.
- 5833. Compassionate, insightful, willing to invest some of himself in the discussion, doesn't have a set "penance of the day" but chooses one appropriate for me in that moment.
- 5834. Temperate, humble, honest, unafraid to admonish the sinner and get a deeper understanding in order to better form my conscience.
- 5835. Good listening skills, as well as a prayerful and calm demeanor.
- 5836. Knowledge. Compassion. An ability to talk.
- 5837. Gentle but thorough.
- 5838. Patience, forgiveness, guidance.
- 5839. Someone who loves being a priest, loves God, loves being Catholic, a priest who witnesses to his belief in Christ by his words and actions.
- 5840. Gentleness.
- 5841. A good, thorough listener.
- 5842. Someone who makes eye contact in face-to-face confessions and has a listening ear.
- 5843. Understanding, prayerful guidance, tying the confession into the recent Gospel messages, and uses the full words of absolution, which are so comforting!
- 5844. A good listener, patient, kind, who provides a meaningful penance.

5845. Prayerful. Heart for mercy. Celebrates sinners coming home. Not judgmental. Cares about not accepting or excusing sin but always loving the sinner.
5846. Kind, smart and real.
5847. Being able to talk about sin and holiness freely.
5848. Compassionate, gives great advice on what to do during temptation.
5849. Good listener, not judging me, and giving me helpful "penance" or suggestions, not just "10 Hail Marys, 10 Our Fathers."
5850. Has a strict adherence to church teaching and does not sugar coat the truth, who is humble, wise, with an extremely strong prayer life and strong devotion to the Eucharist.
5851. A good listener.
5852. Honesty and compassion.
5853. A good listener, empathetic, kind.
5854. Mercy. Kindness. Patience. A priest who is aware of how vulnerable a penitent is.
5855. Compassion, gentleness, kindness, objectivity.
5856. A caring, humble person.
5857. Someone who preaches love. I feel that the Catholic Church sometimes plays into the of being strict and if you don't do XYZ you're going to hell. Confessors should remind us we're all sinners and we need to love not judge.
5858. Someone who doesn't brush me off, and can pastorally help me see Jesus through the grace of the confessional.
5859. Non-judgmental. Practical. Kind. Professional.
5860. One who sees the value of confession! A good confessor is never in a hurry.
5861. Someone who listens, guides through Scripture, relates it to what has been confessed.
5862. Someone who is kind and you can tell has a good heart. Who understands what it's like in families.
5863. Someone who makes me feel comfortable and welcome, who is not going through the motions.
5864. Compassion and wisdom.
5865. One who listens, is gentle, keeps an even tone (doesn't get angry or try to shame), gives a little spiritual direction, and gives something to meditate on after doing my penance.
5866. Patient and kind.
5867. Patience, empathy, kind, understanding.
5868. Someone who is attentive, who asks me what I could do to make changes, who gives some recommendations for assistance.
5869. Patience, generosity, tact, charity.
5870. One who believes what the Church teaches. A lion in the pulpit, and a lamb in the confessional. A rock solid Catholic priest.
5871. Compassion and thoughtfulness
5872. Humility.
5873. Caring and compassionate.
5874. Calm, patient, a teacher of church doctrine.
5875. A good listener who can offer advice to me.
5876. Someone who listens well.
5877. Compassion. Knowledgeable and able to point to scripture or prayer in a way that would help me.
5878. Compassion and wisdom.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 5879. Patience and empathy.
- 5880. Understanding and good advice.
- 5881. Calm, loving, paternal, grace-filled, encouraging, gentle, kind.
- 5882. Understanding, not critical.
- 5883. Passionate.
- 5884. Truly listens, chastises gently if needed, give spirituals counsel, is a holy person but understands the struggles, gives appropriate penance suitable to sins confessed.
- 5885. Compassion, knowledge and a good listener.
- 5886. Kindness, understanding and a few tips that might help me avoid sin in the future.
- 5887. Compassion, kindness and truthfulness.
- 5888. Prayerful, wise, knowledgeable, gentle, honest, caring. These qualities and virtues can be seen not just in the confessional but in how he celebrates the Liturgy, preaches, interacts with the parishioners.
- 5889. Holy, Virtuous, encouraging, inspiring, a good listener - reflecting back what I'm trying to tell him and looking for the root of it to help me.
- 5890. Someone who is kind and gives helpful direction when needed.
- 5891. Listening and asking how you feel about your faith.
- 5892. Understanding, communicates God's everlasting Love.
- 5893. Someone who doesn't diminish the gravity of sin and who also keeps God's infinite mercy firmly in mind. Someone who, like a good father, corrects firmly and gently, according to the needs of his children. Someone who reminds us that spiritual growth is our goal, not just avoiding the grave sins, who tailors discipline and encouragement to the child. Most priests seem warm and friendly to me, but few are willing to chide, admonish, and direct me.
- 5894. Non-judgmental.
- 5895. A priest who is close to the heart of the Father, who listens well and has the gifts of wisdom, understanding and counsel.
- 5896. Fair. Non-emotional. Supportive.
- 5897. Can say hard things without embarrassing me, can give concrete penances that aren't too easy or insanely difficult.
- 5898. Someone who has some training in spiritual direction. A good listener.
- 5899. I've always appreciated a confessor who knows that what they have is dynamite, and acts accordingly. Great confessors know that they can speak the mercy of God upon someone, that they have power to break chains in the hearts of the People of God, and conduct themselves accordingly. There are always practical realities and limitations to this ministry, of course, and any confessor who ignores those will have a poor time, but what separates the great from the good is when a confessor knows he's a vessel for miracles.
- 5900. Caring, empathetic, loving.
- 5901. Prayerfulness, reverence in celebrating Mass, striving for holiness and not settling for mediocrity. Patience, kindness, and all the fruits of the Spirit.
- 5902. Understanding, compassion.
- 5903. Someone who truly listens, asks pertinent questions and gives sound advice and penances.
- 5904. One who listens to what I am saying, who behaves like Christ would behave.
- 5905. Non-judgmental, welcoming.

- 5906. Understanding.
- 5907. Down to earth, who comes across as understanding “human traits” and failures, humble.
- 5908. I appreciate a confessor who engages me in some dialogue about my sins, who welcomes me back into the fold, who does not come across as angry, who is reverent, pious, and takes the sacrament very seriously.
- 5909. Understanding, compassion and forgiving. I like when the priest can see my suffering and acknowledge my pain.
- 5910. Compassion and wisdom.
- 5911. Holiness, humility, and knowledgeable about the spiritual life.
- 5912. Trustworthy to hear my sins.
- 5913. Non-judgmental.
- 5914. Understanding, compassionate and down to earth.
- 5915. Kind, understanding, not judgmental.
- 5916. Compassionate, caring, good in building relationships.
- 5917. Kind and understanding.
- 5918. Active listener, compassionate understanding, kind heart, and respectful.
- 5919. Someone who truly listens and gives feedback.
- 5920. A good listener.
- 5921. Compassionate, actively listening, prayerfully guides on moving forward.
- 5922. A good listener, someone who sees things from a different perspective and can gently explain.
- 5923. Holiness. Courage to tell the truth. Patience to deal with my recurring faults.
- 5924. Brevity, thorough knowledge of Church teaching, humility.
- 5925. Kind, caring, knowledgeable.
- 5926. Able to contextualize sins within one’s overall spiritual life.
- 5927. Honesty.
- 5928. Sincerity.
- 5929. Humility, brevity, kindness, no-nonsense.
- 5930. Kindness, capable of giving me a little direction and gently pointing me to good resources.
- 5931. Empathy, helping me realize that I sin for a reason (i.e. loneliness, sadness, etc.) and that God can heal me.
- 5932. Patience, consideration, the art of listening, good advice.
- 5933. Compassion, good listener.
- 5934. Non-judgmental, understanding and positive.
- 5935. A great listener, who engages in conversation rather than talks down to me.
- 5936. Someone who listens, who doesn’t think he is better than everyone, or treat me as if I’m going to hell.
- 5937. Someone who is like Christ.
- 5938. Honesty and openness.
- 5939. Compassionate, understanding, a good listener, prayerful.
- 5940. Someone who cares.
- 5941. I would hope to see Jesus in his eyes.
- 5942. Compassion. Understanding. Patience. Genuine care.
- 5943. Good listener.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 5944. Knowledgeable, orthodox, wise, and kind.
- 5945. Some who talks to you as a person, who is not critical, who understands the hardships of life.
- 5946. Patience, wisdom.
- 5947. A good listener, down to earth.
- 5948. Understanding and patient, kind and flexible with regards to remembering prayers.
- 5949. Conservative and kind.
- 5950. Kind and understanding.
- 5951. A good listener. A priest who not only "talks the talk" but "walks the walk." A priest who gives penances that are easy to remember!
- 5952. Someone I can ask questions to and who would have the time to answer.
- 5953. A merciful listener who knows the Catechism.
- 5954. Someone who is personal and loves the Sacrament enough to make more opportunities to come.
- 5955. Gentleness. Acceptance. Wisdom. Charity. Compassion. Robust knowledge of the Interior Life. Experience with Inner Healing or Deliverance ministry.
- 5956. Kind, approachable, holds all the teaching of the Catholic Church, orthodox, trustworthy, a man who has a deep prayer life. Someone who connects with people and isn't stand-offish.
- 5957. A good listener with a sense of humor.
- 5958. A good listener and not judgmental.
- 5959. A good listener, who makes the penitent feel welcome. Practical. A good advisor. One who exudes God's Mercy.
- 5960. A priest who follows church teaching, who helps you look at the root of sin, who is not rushed.
- 5961. Understanding. Careful listener. Who looks for underlying issue, not just superficial stuff. Gives good guidance. Knows how to show God's mercy and care for each of us.
- 5962. Someone who is actually living the Christian lifestyle.
- 5963. Compassion, friendliness, warmth. I want him to be glad I'm there and to recognize that going to confession is not easy.
- 5964. Compassion, patience.
- 5965. Someone who understands and doesn't judge you.
- 5966. Gentleness, encouraging, welcoming, sense of non-judgment.
- 5967. A gentle and kind soul.
- 5968. Compassionate, who offers practical counsel, who is able to answer clearly any questions about degree of sin, who affirms your desire to confess your sins and be reconciled to God.
- 5969. An ability to listen well.
- 5970. Someone who is a good listener with some empathy towards your situation and willing to spend a little bit of time with you discussing how faith will help you learn from your sins despite the fact there might be a long line outside the confessional.
- 5971. Someone who accepts people where they are and gently challenges them to be better.
- 5972. Trust and openness.
- 5973. Someone who really listens with his mind and heart, who is in grace with God and takes his time to listen and understand my sins, to give me an appropriate penance and to make me feel I was absolved of my sins.

- 5974. A good listener with the time to listen and respond.
- 5975. A quiet calming voice.
- 5976. Listener.
- 5977. Besides the power of Christ's merits on the Cross, which each validly ordained confessor receives at his ordination, a good spiritual advisor.
- 5978. Patience. Compassion. Good listener.
- 5979. Empathy, gives guidance and key things to work on to move away from that sin, carefully suggested.
- 5980. Someone who understands what the real world today is all about and doesn't give me pat answers from decades ago.
- 5981. A man committed to prayer and faithful to the church's teaching.
- 5982. Non-judgmental, an active listener who asks how he can help.
- 5983. Kindness, care, compassion, love, a good listener. Someone who helps you to see what you have done is wrong, but reminds you that God loves you and offers advice or solutions.
- 5984. Kind and forgiving.
- 5985. Someone who is present and actually listens and recognizes when we are in need of advice.
- 5986. Someone who I trust will give me the right information as Jesus would.
- 5987. Love, compassion, spiritual, not businesslike.
- 5988. Kindness.
- 5989. A holy and honest priest.
- 5990. Kindness and compassion, easy to talk to.
- 5991. Compassion.
- 5992. Present and faithful to the Church.
- 5993. Someone who listens.
- 5994. Someone who can give some advice before we receive the penance.
- 5995. Listening, gentle, who has the gift of counsel, who reveals God's presence in the sacrament, who prompts my continued self-examination.
- 5996. Honesty and love.
- 5997. Kindness and understanding. Someone who can offer helpful suggestions to move forward and not make the same mistakes.
- 5998. Empathy. Not someone who can't admit they are human.
- 5999. Someone filled with the Holy Spirit, someone who really believes in the importance and power of the Sacrament, someone who clearly loves the Lord, the Church and the Blessed Mother.
- 6000. A man of prayer, who wants to bring me closer to God.
- 6001. Patience, helpfulness, a spirit of encouragement.
- 6002. Good listening skills and a desire to guide me.
- 6003. Warmth, patience, a willingness to engage with me and to ask questions, and also a willingness to challenge me.
- 6004. Good listener, caring and kind.
- 6005. Patience, humility, wisdom.
- 6006. Kindness, understanding.
- 6007. A good listener and capable of communication.
- 6008. Kindness, understanding.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6009. Someone who listens and is kind.
- 6010. Kindness, compassion, words of encouragement.
- 6011. Compassion, who treats each penitent as an individual, kind.
- 6012. A good listener, who does not judge or compare, who gives guidance on how to become a better person and how to avoid the sins that I confess so I don't repeat them.
- 6013. One who is always ready to hear a confession, even when it's not time for confession. One who listens and allows Jesus to speak to me through him, and who gives me a suitable penance.
- 6014. Some who shares the love and forgiveness of Christ, who speaks from their heart, who doesn't give canned words.
- 6015. Forthright, direct, soft-spoken, patient, on time, kind.
- 6016. Good listener.
- 6017. Patient. Kind. Understanding of the times in our world. Optimistic.
- 6018. A loving caring type of personality.
- 6019. Encouraging, kind, who doesn't judge.
- 6020. A good listener who is sympathetic and caring.
- 6021. Someone who really listens and isn't afraid to ask questions. Sometimes it feels like the priests are reading from a script.
- 6022. One who listens and sometimes asks for clarification or details. It is nice if they can offer a saint to look up or something extra.
- 6023. A good confessor must be a good listener and communicator to make receiving the sacrament especially worthwhile. He needs to be honest and not afraid to offer constructive advice.
- 6024. Patience and good listening skills. Compassion.
- 6025. Good listener. Patient. Capable of giving brief spiritual guidance.
- 6026. Understanding, knowledgeable, and empathetic.
- 6027. Compassion, kindness.
- 6028. A good listener.
- 6029. One who shows compassion, empathy, and words of encouragement.
- 6030. Empathy.
- 6031. Someone not afraid to give a gentle nudge on how to do better.
- 6032. Good listener and advisor. Someone I would approach with comfort.
- 6033. Listening skills hearing what I am saying no judging.
- 6034. Patient, kind, confident.
- 6035. Wisdom.
- 6036. Compassion, openness, kindness.
- 6037. Good Listener.
- 6038. Caring, and cares that I am comfortable.
- 6039. Willing to give direction.
- 6040. Someone with a good relationship with the Lord
- 6041. Unhurried, friendly, non judgmental.
- 6042. A "Lion in the pulpit, lamb in the confessional."
- 6043. Caring and compassionate, good listener. Spiritual director.
- 6044. Most comforting.
- 6045. Good Listener, compassionate and engaged.

- 6046. Understanding, full of wisdom and counsel. I want to hear not just that I am forgiven but also how to avoid future sin.
- 6047. Non judgmental, interested, generous with insights.
- 6048. Someone who takes his priesthood seriously. Who considers it a vocation and not a career, who's willing to be a true Father to his flock.
- 6049. Someone who makes you feel at ease and non judgmental with their tone but who is honest when trying to explain or teach why we as lay people shouldn't be going against church teaching.
- 6050. Desire for holiness. Holds people accountable. A profound sense of the seriousness of sin combined with complete confidence in God's love and mercy.
- 6051. Good listener, sympathy or empathy depending on the situation, who gives prayerful consideration on how to help me grow in my faith.
- 6052. Holy, knowledgeable, kind.
- 6053. Patient and good listener.
- 6054. Holy, wise, a good listener, who embodies the fruits of Holy Spirit, and gives good penances
- 6055. Must be a good ambassador of Christ.
- 6056. Someone who shows that the Sacrament is important by making time for confession besides Saturday. Someone who talks about it in homilies. Someone who asks for more information to understand the situation. Someone who gives appropriate penances that have some connection to what was just confessed.
- 6057. I look for a holy and happy priest, one who encourages the practice of frequent Confession. A priest who is welcoming, a good listener and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. A priest who is generous with time in the Sacrament.
- 6058. Compassion and good advice.
- 6059. Someone who is generally non-judgmental, matter of fact, knowledgeable in the word, wise (as in gift of wisdom), empathic but not someone who gets caught up in the emotion. Someone who has the prayers in the confessional, because it's hard to remember them by heart!
- 6060. Friendliness and down-to-earth demeanor. Has humility, but is also wise.
- 6061. Someone who listens and helps. A "look into this or that" would be nice.
- 6062. He must be holy. He also must be a good listener and give sound advice.
- 6063. Wisdom, understanding, mildness, kindness.
- 6064. One who is faithful to the teachings of the church and I can trust, one that is nonjudgmental, merciful, and calls me to live virtuously.
- 6065. A good confessor should listen, give spiritual advice, be kind as well as firm, and give a good penance. A good confessor helps me get to heaven.
- 6066. Compassionate. A patient listener.
- 6067. A good listener. Non-judgmental.
- 6068. Someone who strives for holiness himself. Articulate, clear-sighted, compassionate.
- 6069. A good listener, who has an ability to calm frayed nerves, who demonstrates real interest in me as a child of God, not just someone who is there to get absolution and run out of there with a penance.
- 6070. Wise and prudent.
- 6071. Caring, compassionate, fair, rooted in Catholic doctrine.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6072. Patience and kindness. Even those of us who try to prepare well sometimes trip over our words or fail to express ourselves well!
- 6073. Someone who is easy to talk to, a father figure.
- 6074. Understanding, welcoming, easy to talk with.
- 6075. Offers helpful advice on avoiding future sin.
- 6076. Welcoming, a good listener, provides reassurance, neutral.
- 6077. Being able to relate to me, and to understand what I dealing with.
- 6078. Someone who challenges us and gives us hope!
- 6079. Empathy and caring about the person more than applying rules, so that we may really experience reconciliation and not just a juridical confession
- 6080. Compassion and ideas as to how I might avoid downfalls in the past. Someone who can suggest readings of Scripture or a Saint that can help us.
- 6081. Sincerely, brevity, and a touch of empathy.
- 6082. Wise to says things with a lot a lot of love but also the truth. Filled by the Holy Spirit who lets our Lord use him as his instrument.
- 6083. Someone who understands what I'm feeling and can steer me in the right direction. Someone who makes time and doesn't rush.
- 6084. A really listener who gives thoughtful advice, educates on Church teaching, if appropriate to the situation, and encourages.
- 6085. Someone who is able to understand where the person is coming from and give specific advice.
- 6086. Someone who can provide the help that St Frances de Sales describes: "The remedy against all temptation is to open your heart and express its suggestions, feelings and affections to your confessor."
- 6087. Patience, kindness, joy, happiness in being a priest, hopefulness in God's mercy, faithfulness to Truth.
- 6088. A good listener, one who gives me pointed advice based on what I have confessed, and speaks of God's mercy, who is gentle, understanding and does not appear to be in a rush.
- 6089. A serious, authoritative, faithful priest.
- 6090. Someone who is a good listener and provides constructive criticism, solicited or not.
- 6091. Kindness, openness, connectivity, piety, humility and who radiates a sense of peace.
- 6092. Able truly to listen, patient, honest, direct, merciful, dynamic, holy.
- 6093. Makes you feel at ease. Does not make you feel more guilty. Good listener who asks questions for clarification.
- 6094. Compassion, friendliness and genuine interest.
- 6095. Able to listen, prayerful, encouraging.
- 6096. Holiness above all. Faithful. Orthodox. Someone who also receives the Sacrament of Penance frequently.
- 6097. Someone who is only concerned about the state of my soul, rather than someone who wants to be my friend who will lessen the sins I have committed or make excuses.
- 6098. Prudent. Compassionate but stern.
- 6099. Kindness, understanding, humor, patience.
- 6100. A priest who desires to become a saint and wants and believes that I can become one as well.
- 6101. Able to understand my situation, is open and understanding.

- 6102. Counsel.
- 6103. Frankness and gentleness.
- 6104. Someone who listens and properly gives penance.
- 6105. Someone who gives a little guidance!
- 6106. Good, quick direction! Good listening skills.
- 6107. Someone willing to acknowledge something grave or to probe for more information to determine if I have an attachment to a certain sin.
- 6108. Honesty and compassion.
- 6109. Care, compassion, concern.
- 6110. Kindness, suggestions on how to make a better confession.
- 6111. Someone who challenges and helps me to make changes and to improve.
- 6112. I do not always hear well so I appreciate a confessor who is patient with me, who has words of truth and help based on my sins. Some confessors really love being the bearers of God's Mercy and take the sacrament very seriously. Christ died, we can say, so we could go to confession!
- 6113. Calm, caring, patient, humble, working on his own holiness, straightforward, knowledgeable.
- 6114. Compassion and understanding.
- 6115. Someone who isn't going to let me off easy, who offers good and holy suggestions on how to make a proper penance, but also how to possibly mitigate the sin in the first place.
- 6116. One who is patient and clear.
- 6117. A discerning listener.
- 6118. A good priest.
- 6119. Someone who is virtuous and helps us to be virtuous. I hate those who let things slide, who are way too dismissive of my concerns. If I wanted moral relativism I would come to confession.
- 6120. Willing to be direct and encouraging, rather than ignore the hard issues.
- 6121. A strong personal prayer life, insightful, gives valid and licit absolution and doesn't just ad lib, believes all church teachings, will give advice and be tender, is a good listener, reflects the love of the Father, is humble, who gives relevant and meaningful penances. I have one confessor who always ends by asking that I pray for him.
- 6122. Down to earth, kind, not someone who thinks he's Dr. Phil and is going to solve your whole life.
- 6123. Honesty and truthfulness.
- 6124. Honest.
- 6125. Someone who truly listens, not rushing through the confession, who is kind and understanding. We all fall at times and it is nice to hear that God forgives and loves.
- 6126. Honesty and kindness.
- 6127. Kind, caring. Can offer good counsel and an appropriate penance.
- 6128. Someone who shares his own humanity with me.
- 6129. Someone who can discuss the wrong doing without making you feel worse but give you a way to improve.
- 6130. Patience and kindness.
- 6131. Someone who is patient, understanding, gives good solid advice or guidance, and is true to the Catholic faith.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6132. A good listener.
- 6133. Holiness, humility, love, intelligence.
- 6134. Someone who offers thorough spiritual advice even for venial sins and holds me accountable for my sins with mercy.
- 6135. A priest with a rock solid spiritual formation and some training in psychology.
- 6136. Someone who gives me advice.
- 6137. Intelligence, solid understanding of Scripture, empathy, a calming demeanor
- 6138. Holy, a deep prayer life, someone who "likes his job," a good spiritual counselor and advisor, with solid theological depth.
- 6139. Compassion, love, willingness to give helpful advice.
- 6140. Someone who knows how to dig deeper than just the surface level of the sin.
- 6141. Someone who gives consultative support for any particular vice is helpful.
- 6142. I liked when a priest said: "that must be difficult." He showed compassion. He was also encouraging. He gave me a desire to push ahead in my struggle. He also gave me some Scripture to look up as an aid.
- 6143. Kindness and compassion while listening and when addressing the severity of my sins. Friendly with a nice hello and a smiling goodbye. Shows a true interest in what I am saying, evident active listening skills who says something that shows he heard what I confessed.
- 6144. Excited about our Faith, Empathetic, Friendly, Affirming, Understanding.
- 6145. Welcoming and encouraging but also able to offer something that pushes me forward spiritually.
- 6146. Kindness, a smile!
- 6147. Empathy, knowledge, authenticity, Christ-like virtues, a listening ear, good counsel but not a shaming judge.
- 6148. Humility and empathy.
- 6149. Kindness.
- 6150. Good listening skills and friendly.
- 6151. Down-to-earth and compassionate.
- 6152. Compassion, good listener, not rushing me, gives a thought-provoking penance.
- 6153. Honesty and compassion.
- 6154. Kind, caring, maybe asking a question, not lecturing.
- 6155. I appreciate a priest who is patient, but gives good direction for each of my sins.
- 6156. A Christ-like personality.
- 6157. A good listener, discerning, with a Spirit of Wisdom and guidance.
- 6158. A patient listener, willing to give a specific penance, prayerful and aware of the amazing gift of the sacrament!
- 6159. Calm, comforting, not shaming, positive.
- 6160. Understanding and compassion.
- 6161. Wisdom, patience, humility.
- 6162. A very good listener. Compassionate. Willing to ask questions and discuss what I am confessing.
- 6163. Leadership qualities, strength in his convictions and helpful.
- 6164. Someone who is sympathetic and can relate to what I'm saying, who can offer new perspectives on how I can address certain sinful behaviors.
- 6165. I expect to meet Christ Jesus through the Priest.

6166. Compassion is the utmost requirement, but it's also not an environment for novelty and innovation. It's a place to affirm Jesus' and the Church's teachings and to provide clear penances.
6167. Good listener. Good mentor.
6168. Patience, kindness and gentleness in explaining my wrongs.
6169. One that really understands what I am saying and responds with compassion and understanding. Someone who gives another way to look at the situation. Someone who challenges me going forward with a way to reflect on myself and actions and not just to say a few Hail Mary's or Our Father's.
6170. A listener.
6171. Guidance for continued efforts to attain holiness.
6172. Humility.
6173. Serious direction.
6174. A good listener.
6175. One who is understanding.
6176. A good listener, and good adviser.
6177. Compassion. I hope to feel welcomed back to our Lord even though I have sinned.
6178. Someone who is willing to listen, doesn't seem bored, responds to what I confess, not just giving generic advice, someone who seems to be really trying to live as a missionary disciple of Christ, while still struggling himself.
6179. Kind, responsive, understanding, with a sense of humor.
6180. No fire and brimstone. Since I am the guilty one, I am always seeking best advice on how to move forward to overcome any related temptations in the future. Someone who can help me get closer to and communicate with God through prayer and life.
6181. Patience. Presence. Attentiveness. Compassion. Assertiveness (especially regarding making lifestyle changes). Encouragement.
6182. Someone who gives a penance that fits the sins I confessed, and maybe spiritual direction to help me avoid repeating the same mistakes.
6183. Active listening skills, compassion, who gives sincere feedback.
6184. Holiness. Patience. A good listener. Kindness. The ability to convey the seriousness of the root of the seven capital sins and not just lust.
6185. A good confessor listens, but also encourages and challenges the penitent to grow spiritually.
6186. An active listener.
6187. I always look for a confessor who is a good spiritual director as well. The man must be personable and able to communicate on an adult level. I especially benefit from recommendations of books to read or activities to perform specific to the areas in which I need to grow spiritually.
6188. Approachable, faith filled, merciful.
6189. I like when it seems more like a conversation rather than a rote ritual.
6190. Someone who will listen.
6191. Welcoming and compassionate, who leads me to Jesus.
6192. Non-judgmental, a good listener, patient.
6193. Compassionate and understanding, a good listener who helps me find a better path.
6194. Humble, has a strong faith and is gentle like Jesus.
6195. Calm, clear, compassionate, compelling, Christ-like.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6196. Listens and understands.
- 6197. A great listener.
- 6198. Someone who is compassionate and is able to say things that comfort me based on how bad I feel about what has happened.
- 6199. Open and kind.
- 6200. Objective, well informed about the faith, approachable, kind.
- 6201. Listens carefully, doesn't interrupt, offers suggestions and advice, and encourages.
- 6202. Good listener, holiness, compassion, guidance, knowledge, wisdom, not in a big hurry.
- 6203. Welcoming and kind.
- 6204. Patient while listening, open to give advice or suggestions.
- 6205. A good listener, empathetic and who gives counsel prior to absolution.
- 6206. A listening heart who provides encouragement about God's love for me and his gifts to me.
- 6207. I look for gentleness and firmness as well as reflective questions about my sinful choices.
- 6208. Calmness, compassion, thoughtfulness in determining the penance, who asks questions when appropriate.
- 6209. An attentive listener, who gives a meaningful penance, who is gentle but firm.
- 6210. Kindness.
- 6211. A holy man who loves the Lord and is reverent and not overly casual.
- 6212. Loving and caring and a little bit of motivator who reminds me of the love of God,
- 6213. Listening, patient, who gives and leads me to God's mercy and love.
- 6214. Intellectual, personable, invested in my soul and my relation with God and others.
- 6215. Compassionate, understanding, knowledgeable, helpful in giving advice
- 6216. A good listener. Not afraid to cite the Catechism. Uses scripture to good advantage. Encourages. Directs. Guides.
- 6217. Someone who is kind but firm.
- 6218. Compassion, empathy, understanding.
- 6219. Someone who listens to my words and acknowledges my desire for Jesus' love.
- 6220. Patience, holiness, strength to say what is necessary, not what makes me happy.
- 6221. Charity, clarity, leadership, encouragement, without lessening the seriousness of even venial sins.
- 6222. Prayerful.
- 6223. Someone who inspires, and is worthy of, confidence and trust.
- 6224. Someone who is patient with good listening skills, who asks questions and gives advice, who doesn't judge.
- 6225. Non-judgmental.
- 6226. Calm and kind, not judgmental, able to educate and give some practical tips on how to do better, who gives a really good penance that takes some thought and work (like to do some good works or change some habits).
- 6227. Good human formation who understands the human heart and sin, who has a strong spiritual life and deep union with Jesus, so that his words will be both efficacious and kind while also taking my sin seriously.
- 6228. A good listener, non-judgmental, full of spiritual insight, a man of prayer, someone who will point me to God.
- 6229. Empathy, kindness, understanding, thoughtfulness in responses, not always rushing.

- 6230. Caring, compassionate, good listener, kind and merciful.
- 6231. Confidentiality, compassion and forgiveness.
- 6232. Compassion, pastoral, someone who can offer advice or feedback that is constructive, funny and that does not hurt.
- 6233. Kind, understanding, and trustworthy.
- 6234. Understandable, understanding and caring.
- 6235. Kindness
- 6236. Listening skills.
- 6237. Nice and easygoing.
- 6238. Patience, encouragement. I generally feel terrible when I go to confession. I need to be lifted up.
- 6239. Wisdom, compassion, an ability to listen and kindly communicate.
- 6240. Compassion and patience.
- 6241. Gentleness, firmness in doctrine and belief, and reverence for God and the sacrament. One who does not have the "ho-hum" approach.
- 6242. Listener, advisor, merciful, forgiving.
- 6243. Able to listen and provide feedback and counsel, willing to explain the reason for my penance.
- 6244. Someone who is not in a rush, who is holy, thoughtful in his responses and unafraid to speak the truth to me.
- 6245. A good listener.
- 6246. A good listener and prayerful.
- 6247. Kindness, good listening skills, spiritual advice, who gives penances that are appropriate to the confession.
- 6248. Non-judgmental attitude, warm, welcoming, an exemplary priest.
- 6249. Compassion and understanding.
- 6250. Listening, wisdom, compassion, patience.
- 6251. Friendliness, compassion, caring, good listener, patience.
- 6252. Friendliness in inviting me into confession and patience in listening and offering direction to me in my struggles.
- 6253. A priest who believes frequent Confession is important and is not just for mortal sins, who doesn't seem bored by sitting in the confessional hearing venial, common sins, because he wants me to be holy.
- 6254. A good listener, who offers encouragement, a good communicator.
- 6255. Someone with the desire to treat people like Jesus would, empathy, theological knowledge and listening skills.
- 6256. Holy, believes in all the teachings of the Church, gives a meaningful penance, trustworthy.
- 6257. A listener and a joyous person.
- 6258. Someone who does not lose his temper, scold you, or ask, "How could you do this sin?," but who encourages you to pray and ask Jesus to help you with your problems.
- 6259. A penance that has a definite end. "Pray through this scripture" or "say three Hail Mary's." Those are specific and have an end. "Be more patient with your children" is not.
- 6260. Mature, with understanding and life experience.
- 6261. Someone who can set you at ease, talk with you and not at you, and can relate.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6262. When a priest conveys through his words and actions that he is happy to hear a confession, it has a great impact on me!
- 6263. Kind eyes, calm presence. The feeling I am not already being judged before I sit or kneel down.
- 6264. Someone who really listens, who acts as though he truly cares to help me to stop committing sin.
- 6265. Someone who listens, gives advice and encouragement.
- 6266. Understanding, loving, spiritual, like Jesus.
- 6267. Honesty, openness.
- 6268. Patience, kindness and a welcoming atmosphere.
- 6269. Listens to what I'm actually saying and not giving boilerplate responses and penances.
- 6270. Friendliness and concern.
- 6271. Acceptance.
- 6272. Someone who listens to what is being said and does not judge the person confessing, who changes the types of penance given, who doesn't make them too long for older people.
- 6273. One with personal understanding.
- 6274. Kindness, humility and wisdom.
- 6275. Knowledge of scriptures and how they relate to my situation when I come to confession. Non-judgmental. Who gives a penance that will help change my behavior that I was confessing.
- 6276. Understanding, caring.
- 6277. One who is understanding and makes me feel free of sin.
- 6278. Understanding, full of counsel and kindness.
- 6279. I like my confessor to remind me of Jesus, to be honest, loving, listening, and patient.
- 6280. To not feel admonished for my wrongdoings.
- 6281. One who listens, validates, and offers wisdom.
- 6282. Good listener, compassionate and understanding.
- 6283. Listens intently. Comments appropriately. Speaks compassionately.
- 6284. Patience and sincere concern.
- 6285. Understanding, compassion, good advice.
- 6286. Quiet, peaceful, thoughtful, encouraging.
- 6287. Willing to hear confessions more frequently.
- 6288. Positive and welcoming attitude to whoever comes to them. An encouraging smile on his face!
- 6289. One who seems alert and intent on being a good confessor.
- 6290. A good listener, patient, gentle.
- 6291. Interest in me and my desire to please God.
- 6292. Not rushed, but also not long-winded. Someone who reminds the penitent that God is merciful, that Jesus is glad you've come to confession, and who has worked hard to understand the various states of life outside of the priesthood to know where people are coming from.
- 6293. Compassion and understanding that although we all strive to be like Christ, it is difficult.
- 6294. Caring.
- 6295. Non-judgmental. Understanding. Hope giving.

- 6296. Empathy and exceptional hearing.
- 6297. Focused and willing to give feedback, encouraging when I'm nervous or uncomfortable or have been away for a long time.
- 6298. Compassion.
- 6299. Their insight.
- 6300. Good listener, compassion.
- 6301. Listening. Asking questions. Reminding me to add "all my other sins" after I say all the others.
- 6302. Someone who make me feel comfortable while confessing.
- 6303. Someone who is orthodox and adheres to the teachings of the Church, who doesn't downplay the seriousness of sin.
- 6304. A priest who counsels me and doesn't sugarcoat it, who is gentle and understanding.
- 6305. One who gives spiritual advice.
- 6306. Totally committed to Jesus, with a good sense of humor and a willingness to listen to the entire story before judging.
- 6307. One who takes time to express God's mercy and love.
- 6308. A truthful man who fully supports the ancient teachings of the church regarding virtue and morality.
- 6309. Understanding and willingness to ask helpful questions..
- 6310. Answers my questions and concerns without being long winded.
- 6311. Kindness, wisdom and joy.
- 6312. Gentle, loving, merciful, thoughtful about the penance he gives. I love the times the priest gives me specific things to do like visiting an older person, scripture readings to read, and subjects on which to pray.
- 6313. Someone who really listens as though you and your confessions is their sole focus.
- 6314. A patient listener, who is non-judgmental and kind.
- 6315. A good listening heart.
- 6316. Kindness, compassion, humility.
- 6317. The gift of truly listening. Nothing upsets me more than seeing a priest going over his homily on the other side of the screen! Gentleness always helps. Not being too quick to bring it to an end! Encouragement always!
- 6318. Good listener, kind, who gives good advice.
- 6319. Pragmatic, who guides me to toward a better life Christian life.
- 6320. Empathy. Acceptance. Guidance
- 6321. Good listener, compassionate, and able to give wisdom without judgment.
- 6322. Sincere and prayerful, not political.
- 6323. Loving compassion, empathy, authentic, merciful.
- 6324. Not in a rush. My experience has been a two-minute thing and you're out. I've never had a priest give me any advice. It's like, "Let's get this over with."
- 6325. One who listens and helps with thinking through the sins.
- 6326. Someone who understands people, understands the miracle of confession, says inspiring comments suggestions and allows miracle of absolution and reconnection to God to take place.
- 6327. Kindness, empathy, mercy.
- 6328. Understanding and empathy.
- 6329. The closer to the teachings of Jesus the better.

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6330. Compassion and wisdom.
- 6331. A calming attitude. Someone who does not see themselves as superior or more righteous.
- 6332. Compassion, understanding, patience, with a love that comes through, a penance that makes sense.
- 6333. Empathy and brutal honesty.
- 6334. Asks questions, seeks to understand
- 6335. Compassion and guidance.
- 6336. Understanding and empathy.
- 6337. Sympathy, wisdom, and the willingness to tell me how seriously I have sinned.
- 6338. Wisdom.
- 6339. Interested, compassionate, thoughtful, patient.
- 6340. Humility first. A quiet and humble priest makes me feel like he really is wanting to help save my soul. Also, a smile now and then doesn't hurt. That makes it feel less like I'm about to get scolded by a school principal.
- 6341. Kindness, gentleness, wisdom.
- 6342. Holiness, man of prayer, humility, kindness, patience.
- 6343. Someone who lets me talk through my sins and give some background. Someone who can give pointers on how to handle a sinful situation in the future.
- 6344. Understanding and compassionate. Not judgmental.
- 6345. Loving and forgiving without judging.
- 6346. Kind.
- 6347. What are Christ's virtues? Love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, understanding, counsel.
- 6348. Availability.
- 6349. Sympathy.
- 6350. Compassionate.
- 6351. One who listens, is encouraging, asks questions, gives advice for spiritual growth, has a warmth that comes from a deep personal relationship with God.
- 6352. Compassion and understanding of our frailties.
- 6353. Kindness, ability to see shades of gray, not dogmatic, sincere, holy.
- 6354. A confessor who listens and picks up where I'm at.
- 6355. Sincerity, kindness and understanding.
- 6356. Compassionate, active listener. Doesn't assume since I sinned I don't know my faith.
- 6357. Someone who understands what I'm saying and listens with his heart.
- 6358. One who does not yell at the penitent or promote his political agenda.
- 6359. Someone who clearly enjoys hearing confessions and wouldn't mind staying as necessary.
- 6360. One who isn't a judge but a father.
- 6361. Kindness, understanding and patience.
- 6362. A "Christ-like" attitude of love, forgiveness, welcoming, peace and mercy.
- 6363. Faithfulness to Church teaching is essential. I don't appreciate a priest telling me I'm too hard on myself or that I'm a "good person."
- 6364. Someone with good listening skills, who can speak to the penitent without judgment, and who can provide spiritual insight; someone who is present to me in the moment.
- 6365. Peacefulness.

- 6366. Listening skills, understanding and forgiveness.
- 6367. A capacity to listen, patient, joyful.
- 6368. Kindness, compassion, empathy, who gives good counsel without scolding.
- 6369. A priest who listens and tries to see why I feel I have fallen short of the mark, who recognizes that some things should not be done, recognizes that maybe I need to change and helps me.
- 6370. Listens and shares his thoughts.
- 6371. Patient, willing to ask questions to draw me out, willing to do either face-to-face or behind-the-screen depending on my need at the time (have both in the room).
- 6372. Someone who thinks it's good that I'm there and doesn't get hung up on how long it's been.
- 6373. Empathy, compassion, selfless interest and a desire to help, humanity, humility, impartial listener.
- 6374. Compassion, openness, prayerful and ready to facilitate knowing myself and God better.
- 6375. Good listening skills, no harsh judgments and compassion.
- 6376. Personal but evenhanded, merciful above all.
- 6377. Patience, kindness.
- 6378. Someone who listens, asks a few questions for understanding, is compassionate, offers perspective, insight and good advice.
- 6379. Caring, good listener, humble, trustworthy, who lives his faith outside the confessional.
- 6380. Patience, kindness, humanity, someone who can distinguish among penitents, and knows how to be all things to all people, quick with those who are ashamed and helpful for those with doubts and questions.
- 6381. Patient, good advice giver, kind.
- 6382. Someone who listens from the heart, who can question or try to understand the context of the sin, who has worked hard to hear in the language of the penitents according to their culture.
- 6383. Kind and understanding.
- 6384. One who guides you through the process and assist you in discerning how to grow spiritually.
- 6385. Someone who acknowledges that confession is awkward.
- 6386. Compassion, empathy, and who gives creative and thoughtful penances.
- 6387. Someone who is able to give good guidance.
- 6388. Patient, gentle, inspiring, holiness of life.
- 6389. Open-minded, a good listener, nonjudgmental, friendly, and compassionate.
- 6390. Good listener, good advisor.
- 6391. Perspective, spirituality and grounding.
- 6392. Patient, understanding, doesn't lecture, who asks if I've forgotten anything.
- 6393. Compassion, deeply spirituality, experienced.
- 6394. Gentleness coupled with insightful advice that truly challenges me to grow. A confessor challenged very sweetly me to grow in humility by praying for humiliations over a decade ago and it changed my life!
- 6395. Listener.
- 6396. Engaged in the task. Holy. Inspiring.
- 6397. Patience.

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- 6398. Respectful, who meet the person where he or she is at, compassionate, who genuinely love and cares for people, is non-judgmental and encouraging.
- 6399. Good listener, compassionate, affirming.
- 6400. Kind, understanding, insightful, wise.
- 6401. Someone who listens, relates the sacrament to God's love, reminds us that we are worthy, tells me that I made a "good confession."
- 6402. An ability to listen without judgment.
- 6403. A good listener, who can somewhat "restate" what is really bothering me, who can offer good advice, good reading, and good prayers to deal with the sins I have confessed.
- 6404. Disciplined. Prayerful. With a radiant relationship with Christ. Quality knowledge of the moral life in order to instruct penitents on their sins and habits as well as having the remedy that they can practice.
- 6405. Patience, kindness, understanding, wisdom.
- 6406. Compassionate and one who truly listens before giving any advice or penance.
- 6407. Gentle honesty.
- 6408. Good listener!
- 6409. Comforting, attentive and forgiving. I don't need a judge or teacher.
- 6410. Compassion, good advice to me, and assuring me that no matter what the sin is, Our Lord will forgive it if we are sorry.
- 6411. A good listener who is solid in what the faith teaches. He should be encouraging, but not lenient. He should help me rise to the occasion, not tear me down.
- 6412. Years of experience.
- 6413. Listening. Holiness.
- 6414. Empathy, ability to listen, patience, frankness, and the ability to give a meaningful penance!
- 6415. Not just a listener but also an advisor.
- 6416. Someone who listens to understand and not to judge. Someone who outside of the confessional embraces and demonstrates mercy. Someone who's not afraid to walk with the lost and suffering. Someone who displays humility and admits to his own failings and need for God's mercy.
- 6417. Honest, direct, attentive.
- 6418. Not feeling rushed. Good listener. Asks clarifying questions. Calm
- 6419. Compassion and flexibility. Not sure why some are so strict about the process.
- 6420. Kindness, gentleness and compassionate.
- 6421. Patience, high emotional intelligence, and a good balance between thoroughness and brevity.
- 6422. Openness, good listener, not rushed.
- 6423. A guy who is happy and doesn't overreact. Holy and prayerful. Kind without being permissive.
- 6424. Compassionate and friendly.
- 6425. Loving, firm, understanding of circumstances, encouraging.
- 6426. Compassion, wisdom.
- 6427. Prayerful and who enters into the sacramental encounter with the solemnity that is proper. Someone who allows a patient silence that allows their heart to receive and reflect inspiration from Christ himself. Someone who embodies the tender holiness of St. Joseph.

- 6428. Patience, compassion, with spiritual depth not superficiality.
- 6429. Kindness.
- 6430. Listening, caring, supporting, encouraging, seeking to guide you into a deeper personal relationship with Our Lord in prayer, so not just sending you off with three Hail Marys....
- 6431. Humble, encouraging, holy.
- 6432. Compassion, kindness.
- 6433. Wisdom and patience. Not someone who is trying to rush you out and move on to the next person.
- 6434. Willingness to be available often, patience, joy and willingness to convey the joy of Christ amidst the sins of the laity, but most importantly commitment to prayer.
- 6435. Understanding of my situation. Able to give me advice based on my confession.
- 6436. Understanding, with advice and encouragement.
- 6437. Ability to listen carefully and to ask appropriate questions to help me understand why I fall into the same sins repeatedly. When the confessor's tone is kind and merciful, I more fully appreciate God's presence in the Sacrament.
- 6438. A priest who gives me the space to say what I need. Who doesn't make me feel rushed. Who is readily available for souls without complaint.
- 6439. Someone who has a genuine interest in what I am trying to communicate.
- 6440. Receptive, gentle, tender, intuitive, asking questions, making recommendations or suggestions on how to improve.
- 6441. Trustworthy. Joyful as a priest. Pursuing holiness himself.
- 6442. Joy. Peace. Sense of humor. Wisdom. Confidence in God's love and self-confidence, so that there isn't a sense of needing to undermine or belittle someone else.
- 6443. One who's attentive and gives gentle guidance. One who gives me hope and comfort. As someone who is very shy, I look for someone who's friendly and makes me feel comfortable.
- 6444. Prayerful. Good listener. Succinct. Faithful.
- 6445. Patient and understanding, yet firm.
- 6446. Understanding and not judgmental.
- 6447. Patient, humble, interested, good listener, pastorally sensitive, nonjudgmental.
- 6448. A good listener. Though I realize it's not necessary for absolution, without some comment or question from the priest, I often don't feel heard or cared for.
- 6449. Understanding, honest, non-judgmental, good listener, has the ability to hold a mirror up to me, humble, knowledgeable in scripture and can apply it to daily life, leads by example, wise, provides good counsel.
- 6450. Encouraging and hopeful.
- 6451. Someone who puts you at ease and doesn't judge you.
- 6452. Empathy, humanity, who listens and seeks to understand first prior to judging (preferably not judging at all)
- 6453. Someone who truly listens and doesn't talk too much.
- 6454. Caring, good listener, one I can understand.
- 6455. Humility and compassion.
- 6456. Gentleness, compassion, humor, empathy, joy, holiness and the acknowledgment that he, too, is a sinner and he understands the struggle, yet perseveres despite our humanity and sinfulness.

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- 6457. Compassion, non-judgmental, and not too conservative.
- 6458. Sincere belief. Holiness.
- 6459. Well-educated and well-formed.
- 6460. A good listener and a good advisor.
- 6461. A good listener, showing empathy, doesn't judge me for what I'm saying.
- 6462. Someone who is "present," holy, listening, compassionate.
- 6463. Thoughtful, prayerful, broad-minded, who lives the gospel rather than living his version of it, who doesn't judge others harshly, who truly listens and follows the considerations of Pope Francis rather than deciding he knows and understands better than the pope.
- 6464. An attentive listener, who takes my sins seriously, gives good practical advice for reform, and challenges me to do better.
- 6465. Compassionate. Reasonable. With a deep, living faith in God. Someone who can meet me where I am. Someone who can encourage me to become the person I strive to be.
- 6466. Someone willing to listen, who can explain if explanation is needed, who helps me feel very close to our Lord in confession.
- 6467. A prayerful priest who is firm but compassionate.
- 6468. A priest who shows he's listening, admits his own imperfections and stresses the love of Jesus.
- 6469. Non-hurried, sincerely interested in my concerns, and gives advice.
- 6470. Attentive, prayerful, responsive.
- 6471. Kindness, encouragement, wisdom.
- 6472. Compassion, wisdom, humor, knowledge.
- 6473. Someone who listens well and asks good questions to promote critical thinking.
- 6474. Compassion. Humor. Good listener.
- 6475. Gentle, but very firm with church teaching, who helps me be serious about recognizing my sins and sincere in making a plan not to commit those sins again.
- 6476. A virtuous priest who won't gloss over sins.
- 6477. Compassionate. Straight-forward. Christ-driven.
- 6478. Empathy. Kindness. Ability to listen. Compassion.
- 6479. Compassion and a pastoral rather than a dogmatic approach. Humility.
- 6480. Patient, listening, non judgmental, gives good advice, understanding, able to be critical without accusing me, able to tell me when I have messed up more than I'm willing to admit.
- 6481. Kindness. Understanding. Who inspires in me the courage to "come clean."
- 6482. Compassion, love, forgiveness. Like Jesus.
- 6483. Merciful, patient, rooted in the Holy Spirit.
- 6484. A good listener, sense of humor, broad life experience.
- 6485. Understanding, patience, kindness, wisdom, humility, experience.
- 6486. Humility and openness to the Spirit, someone who has deeply experienced the Lord's mercy and wants to share that mercy with others.
- 6487. Not too chatty, gives good advice directed at one or two main things.
- 6488. Honest. Real. Knowledgeable of the world. Knowledgeable of temptations of the world. Someone who can relate to our brokenness.
- 6489. A good listener, speaks to what I have confessed, encourages me to continue to strive to live the way Jesus taught us.

- 6490. The main charisma that I seek is a vocation to fatherhood. I want a confessor who is compassionate, but willing to ask the hard question, or say the hard thing like a father ought. He should have attention, listening, wisdom, and fortitude.
- 6491. Gentle, wise, faith-filled, compassionate, honest, with a deep personal relationship with God and a willingness to share and guide.
- 6492. Good listener, kind, friendly, reassuring and welcoming.
- 6493. Patience.
- 6494. Attentive and a mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.
- 6495. Capable of adapting to each person's individual situation.
- 6496. Compassion, patience, an understanding demeanor.
- 6497. Kind and understanding, but not a push-over.
- 6498. Humanity. Non-judgmental. Not overly pious.
- 6499. Practicality. Positive. Comforting and firm.
- 6500. Clear and understandable.
- 6501. Good listener, empathy, provides guidance, relates in some way, brings a sense of humanity into the confessional.
- 6502. Patience, kindness, truth, encouragement to do better, sense of humor, nonjudgmental.
- 6503. Someone who is patient, knowledgeable, tender, and focuses less on categorizing sin and more about how sin disrupts my relationship with God.
- 6504. Humor, life experiences, empathy.
- 6505. The ability to forget, not know me, never associate who I am with what I've done.
- 6506. Someone who doesn't give me the same penance regardless of the gravity of my sins. I liked when a confessor asked me to read a particular psalm or say a prayer to a saint; they were tailored to my needs.
- 6507. Sense of humor. Being able to connect as a human being.
- 6508. Compassionate, intelligent.
- 6509. Friendly, Merciful, Empathic.
- 6510. Merciful, gentle, firm, kind, joyful.
- 6511. Patience, wisdom, understanding, and openness.
- 6512. Kind, good advice with scripture.
- 6513. Compassionate, not shaming, able to prompt reflection without coming across as accusatory.
- 6514. Someone full of kindness, gentleness, warmth, ability to advise on how to think about the sins I struggle with going forward.
- 6515. Someone who listens and gives a bit of feedback, who makes you feel like you aren't as bad as you think you are.
- 6516. Someone who practice what he preaches, with honesty, integrity, compassion, who is a good listener and kind.
- 6517. Good listener, non-judgmental.
- 6518. Kindness and not being too long winded
- 6519. Compassionate, a good and active listener. One that does not always have an answer to every problem.
- 6520. Respectable inside and outside the confessional.
- 6521. Concise, yet able to pinpoint practices that help to grow in virtue. Compassionate but not eager to make light of my sins.

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- 6522. Priests who ask about my sins, who do not try to rush me, who thank me for coming to confession and who are happy to give God's mercy.
- 6523. Sincere, prayerful, wise.
- 6524. Kindness, hope, encouragement.
- 6525. Understanding. Empathetic. Non-judgmental.
- 6526. Those who allow me to be heard and try to understand me.
- 6527. Wisdom, experience, patience, strict adherence to the faith, joy.
- 6528. Compassion.
- 6529. Life experience.
- 6530. Loving, helpful and forgiving
- 6531. One who listens with an open and inviting heart, who is willing to engage me with insightful questions and observations.
- 6532. One who loves and shows that love through his actions and words.
- 6533. Compassionate, joyful, prayerful, encouraging.
- 6534. Someone who listens and doesn't rush you out.
- 6535. Listening and willing to engage in some level of conversation, who will give a penance that matches the sin, even if it's just reading a related Bible passage.
- 6536. Kindness, patience, ability to work calmly through solutions to sins if needed. Without bitterness or fire and brimstone.
- 6537. Someone who listens with compassion, who knows the law of the church but also the spirit in which that law was created.
- 6538. Understanding, love, kindness, open mindedness.
- 6539. Compassion.
- 6540. Understanding, unconditional positive regard, compassionate, non-judgmental.
- 6541. Wisdom, prudence, mercy, humility, transparency.
- 6542. Kind listening, acceptance, reassurance that I am good and not defined by my sins, humor, humanity.
- 6543. Faithful to Church teaching, doesn't make confession a counseling session.
- 6544. Kindness, understanding, gentleness.
- 6545. Understanding, a deep, contemplative spiritual being, who lives with integrity.
- 6546. Listens attentively, patient, gives hope and peace with his words and demeanor.
- 6547. Mature.
- 6548. Patience and radical hospitality.
- 6549. Kindness.
- 6550. Someone who understands what life is.
- 6551. One who listens and shares with confidence the teachings of the faith.
- 6552. Someone who takes me seriously, listens, tries to understand, encourages and empowers.
- 6553. Calm, compassionate, understanding.
- 6554. Someone who provides for anonymity.
- 6555. One who listens to the Holy Spirit. A priest of deep prayer.
- 6556. Someone who exercises the charism of healing in all aspects of his priesthood. Genuine. Caring. Scriptural.
- 6557. A good listener, understanding, calm and empathic.
- 6558. Kindness, patience, humility.
- 6559. Non-judgmental, willing to listen.

6560. Empathy, humor, life experience, someone who is like me, and less like a judgmental wooden soldier.
6561. Good listener, looks you in the eye, give specific advice and reactions to specific circumstances.
6562. Gentle, compassionate, non-judgmental.
6563. Someone who sounds like Christ, non-judgmental in any way but encouraging.
6564. Good listener. Someone who can give advice.
6565. Someone who is an active listener, who gives signs that he understands what I am saying, and most importantly, gives me advice on how to do better.
6566. Openness, understanding, patience, knowledge of the teachings of the Church.
6567. Personable.
6568. Knowledge of contemplative tradition, humility, knowledge, kindness, awareness of the Social Teaching of Church.
6569. A good listener, one who takes time to give feedback and one who has confession more than just reconciliation before Saturday Mass.
6570. Compassion, mercy and understanding.
6571. A good listener. Someone who gives the impression he really cares.
6572. Kindness, impartiality, a sense of humor, patience, and – and this is a hard one – a kind of sixth sense on what the penitent really needs.
6573. Understanding, able to offer helpful criticism, and assign meaningful and helpful penances.
6574. Friendly, good listener, patient, not too “easy” on me.
6575. Compassion.
6576. Empathy, support, understanding.
6577. To be a good listener. To have wisdom and understanding.
6578. Compassion
6579. Non-judgmental. Listens and does not look at his watch, someone who understands real life.
6580. Someone who listens, asks questions, and challenges you to do better.
6581. Someone who helps you look into your heart and soul.
6582. Joy, Empathy, Patience.
6583. Wisdom. Humility. Understanding the evil of sin and not minimizing it.
6584. Someone who listens, challenges, loves, encourages, doesn't settle for a surface experience but is willing to go deeper with you.
6585. Patient and welcoming, who behaves like hearing confessions is not a burden to be endured.
6586. Confessors who are faithful and direct with regard to the teachings of the Church and do not show false compassion for disordered temptations.
6587. An abundance of mercy and a nuanced understanding of how hard it can be to be sometimes.
6588. Compassion, not rushing through the conversation, a willingness to help me sort through some of the sins I bring up or to give insight in avoiding these sins in the future.
6589. Honest, kind.
6590. Intelligence, education, understanding.

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6591. Listener. I prefer that they do not try to relate to me because the priesthood is so different from the female experience.
6592. Kindness, understanding, charity, warmth.
6593. Honesty, discernment, compassion, wisdom.
6594. Kind, virtuous, able to give sound spiritual advice.
6595. Patience and understanding.
6596. Someone who has the ability and desire to treat confession as an opportunity to improve and grow.
6597. Good listening skills, empathy, insight, sound advice for overcoming self-made spiritual obstacles.
6598. Compassion and not sounding like you are bored.
6599. Patience. I hate to feel rushed, or like I'm taking up too much of his time. Honesty. Not trying to convince me that something wasn't a sin when I clearly felt it was. Trying to minimize my hatred of sin, which lessens my motivation to change.
6600. Understanding, merciful in his words, Christ-like, everything that makes me feel like talking to Jesus.
6601. One who sees the opportunity to help someone find God in his life.
6602. Compassionate.
6603. Understanding. Not speaking about things they have not experienced or understand.
6604. Honesty. Compassion. Hope.
6605. An advisor not a judge.
6606. Patience, compassion, good listener.
6607. Compassion, understanding, prayerful, human.
6608. Honesty.
6609. Wisdom, kindness, an ability to listen and give advice when appropriate.
6610. Openness, humor, personality; traits that typically accompany those most willing to forgive!
6611. Compassion, understanding, humility.
6612. Someone who demonstrates compassion and understanding, but also is competent at explaining Church teaching.
6613. Warm, welcoming.
6614. Prayerful.
6615. Kind eyes, smiling and welcoming. Listening without judgment. Asking how he can be of assistance.
6616. A strong sense of welcome and joy. Wisdom. Someone who knows God's mercy and love and longs to share it with others.
6617. Honesty and sense he knows he is representing God.
6618. One who listens attentively, reviews certain issues he perceives, ask questions, relates to situations in the persons's life, and gives practical spiritual advice.
6619. Someone who is present, prepared, compassionate, non-judgmental, empathic, and knows the Word.
6620. Sympathy and wisdom.
6621. Discernment. Frankness. Kindness. Compassion. I once had a grave sin, very out of character for me, and was very fortunate to meet a wise confessor.
6622. A person whose humanity is accessible in the way he listens and whose spirituality is evident in the way he forgives.

- 6623. Empathy.
- 6624. A good listener and an understanding soul.
- 6625. Empathy. Caring. Doesn't talk down to me.
- 6626. Listens well. Acts in persona Christi, as Jesus would act towards a human being in need of spiritual support. Focuses on conscience formation and spiritual guidance.
- 6627. Someone who listens well, asks kind but pertinent questions and gives relevant suggestions for my life in addition to absolution.
- 6628. Compassion, great listening skills, knowledge of human frailties, and the ability to spot abuse or other possible harmful situations without being told directly. I know that's a tall order.
- 6629. Patience, a good listener, compassionate, gives encouragement and good direction but at the same time goes by the teachings of the Church. Strong when it comes to what Jesus taught but gentle towards the individual who is repentant.
- 6630. Welcoming, compassionate and understanding.
- 6631. A good listener and someone who challenges me to grow in holiness and faith.
- 6632. Someone who is welcoming, kind, helpful, understanding, non-judgmental and forgiving like our Lord!
- 6633. Honesty, willingness to speak the truth without being afraid to hurt my feelings, charity, discernment.
- 6634. Someone who is welcoming, open and warm, who is willing to have a conversation with me, the way Jesus had conversations with people.
- 6635. Humility, honesty, empathy, kindness, someone who leads by example.
- 6636. Compassion.
- 6637. Someone who makes relevant suggestions for where to go for help when I am tempted to sin.
- 6638. Good listener and someone who understands the issues the people struggle with these days, like drugs, divorce, and so on.
- 6639. Empathetic listener. Who gives sincere prayer suggestions for penance.
- 6640. Patience, empathy, interested in my spiritual growth.
- 6641. Compassion, understanding, and maturity.
- 6642. A priest who really listens and asks for clarifications if I'm not explaining myself.
- 6643. Spiritual and humble.
- 6644. Supportive, understanding, and mild mannered.
- 6645. A good listener, patient, honest and holy. Someone who will speak of the true teachings of the church, who will be honest and straight with me but is also compassionate.
- 6646. That he not judge, but be fatherly, patient and sweet!
- 6647. Holiness. Humility. Respect for the penitent. Telling the penitent the truth. Not minimizing sin because sin kills the spirit and is an affront to God.
- 6648. Calm, patient, who can throw a joke in to lighten the mood.
- 6649. A priest that gives advice. Just doesn't say you are forgiven and "Say five Hail Marys."
- 6650. A listener and someone with more availability than 15 minutes before Mass. I don't want to make Mass late if I am in the confessional room and other people are waiting or that he needs time to put garments on before Mass.

## **If you were speaking to a group of priest-confessors, what advice might you give them to help you to experience more profoundly God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?**

6651. Say a prayer first that you may give a good confession to whoever arrives. Take someone's troubles, forgive them and give hope to them. Life is not black and white. You may not have heard the situation around the sin and jumped to conclusions. Put love and compassion as the number one aim.
6652. Speak often about God's desire that we be healed and of His power to save. Don't ever take out a bad mood on your penitent. Take a long view and don't be harsh: you want this person to feel comfortable coming back next time.
6653. Make God's love the prism through which you judge others, their lives and their deeds.
6654. Try to make a connection so that an individual will have no hesitation to go to confession to return to a state of grace.
6655. Always be aware of the awesome, mercy and love conveyed in the sacrament. Meet each person where he or she is. It is often very hard for that person to face his or her own actions. Sometimes even small sins injure greatly.
6656. Be gentle and loving.
6657. When I sought a priest after the loss of my virginity, it would have helped if he invited me and my boyfriend to come together for counseling afterward.
6658. When speaking to married couples or women, in particular, not to assume to understand their personal struggles without asking for some history, if possible, of a difficult situation or the reason the person is in need of reconciliation.
6659. Remember you are a priest first and act accordingly when you interact with your people in and out of the church setting. It's okay to be a sports fan or have various interests, for example, but when those things define you, it's time to regroup.
6660. Let us know that the sacraments are for all Catholics and that the Church always welcomes us, whoever we are wherever we are on our spiritual journey.
6661. Please treat women as they should be treated, and homosexuals, and bisexuals and everyone.
6662. Give time to let the penitent think. Speak about the grace and mercy I am receiving (not all of us know all we should about those topics). Offer suggestions about faith life.
6663. Be Jesus for me. I am looking to my Father who forgives and asks me to be better, not a buddy.
6664. Be where your feet are. Be here with me in this moment.
6665. As Pope Francis said: "Confession should not be a torture chamber."
6666. To the extent possible, prioritize hearing confessions over the administration of parishes. Priests are ordained for the sacraments; leaving temporalities to the professionals.

6667. Be present. Listen well. Ask gentle questions. Skip platitudes and pat advice.
6668. Make it a conversation, not just one person ticking off a list.
6669. Be attentive and compassionate. Make the penitent feel comfortable. Don't insist on specific format or language. Acknowledge that it may be a difficult experience for us and try to be helpful in suggesting ways for us to go forward confident in the love and mercy of God.
6670. Listen.
6671. The sacrament is a gift for both participants. Today many don't feel it is essential because we think we can confess directly to God and that he hears us. Think about the penances given. Saying rote prayers is not meaningful. Maybe a specific act of kindness would be a better penance.
6672. Sometimes it's hard to articulate what I want to confess. I would be open to the priest asking me questions and giving me different perspective or sharing personal experiences.
6673. Love, love, love.
6674. Listen carefully and respond to each person's confession. Give advice that isn't generic.
6675. Take the time to have the penitent open up about what they're confessing. It really does matter to be able to be completely open. I always feel so lost in the process no matter how many times I confess. Guide us.
6676. Listen well, offer hope, arouse a sense of God's never ending love for me.
6677. Let the person know you're really listening, responding to their words and sorrow. Validate the courage it takes to confess their sins and assure them that God has forgiven them. Don't just go through the motions.
6678. See us as God's children, not as a petulant child that needs harsh advice. Recognize with compassion that we are all walking different paths in life, perhaps different from your own personal views. Leave your personal opinions out; you are there to help us reconcile with God, not you. We are confessing to God, whom you are representing: respond as He would.
6679. Show God's mercy.
6680. Listen with an open heart. Don't rush.
6681. Never ever shame anyone. The penitent is already ashamed enough.
6682. Pray and remind yourself that each person is different.
6683. Show interest and give guidance.
6684. We are all sinners. It is your gift to help us along the way.
6685. Help relieve anxiety. Assist us with questions.
6686. Remind us. The laity need to know why the sacrament is important. Offer more times for confession.
6687. Really listen, take time, prayerfully consider your response and the penance you impose.
6688. We don't need the priest to tell us that we made a mistake. We know we did. That's why we are going to confession. We need compassion and encouragement.
6689. Listen to points made often by pope Francis: confessional not a torture chamber. How often do you yourself go to confession? Do you believe in it? Is it a joyful privilege? Ask yourself why the majority no longer go to confession and don't indicate loss of sense of sin as primary reason? How really available are you for the Sacrament?

*Merciful Like the Father*

- 6690. Compassion and an understanding that sin traps us and leads us away from our humanity and purpose in life.
- 6691. Understand that you are just the instruments.
- 6692. Make the connection. Live the message.
- 6693. It is important to be fully engaged. If you are unable to do that, as we all are at times, reschedule.
- 6694. Remind us of God's mercy and forgiveness. Sometimes it's hard to fathom.
- 6695. Communicate the love of God and the everlasting mercy and majesty of God.
- 6696. Please understand that I want to come more often but I'm scared and it may have taken everything I've got to get me there this one time. Please invite me back by your words and nonverbal communication.
- 6697. Listen, try to relate, and impart a sense of hope and comfort.
- 6698. Help me better understand why I sinned.
- 6699. Embrace the individuality of people and their experience. Recognize that modern man is under extreme pressure with mental health issues everywhere.
- 6700. Be empathetic and not judgmental.
- 6701. Listen to what is not being said as much as to what is said.
- 6702. Be kind and remember that it's not easy for us to tell you things we don't even tell our best friends. We tell you things we are ashamed of doing. We don't need to leave feeling worse about ourselves. If we walk out feeling good and understanding we're human, then we are likely to return. If we feel bad about ourselves, we will stay away from the sacrament longer.
- 6703. Stress God's love for everyone.
- 6704. Talk about confession in your normal conversation with people to show it is part of your routine. People will notice and be attracted to what you have. But do so in a balanced way. I've heard some confession-obsessed priests who are not so attractive, many of whom, years later, were found to have wrestled a great deal with serious sin. Please don't schedule the only available confession immediately before Mass. It's obvious that you are trying to multi-task. Be a compassionate man in normal life. Not only will it encourage people to trust you, it will help you celebrate the sacrament with them.
- 6705. Do not continue the practice of forcing a whole parish to rush in and share 30 minutes of time for Confession before Mass. It's time to move past reducing Confession to "get in there and recite your list of sins, say no more." Confession must be more relational otherwise it's going through motions and leaves us feeling empty and sad.
- 6706. Listen. Be gentle. Have empathy.
- 6707. Please don't lecture or say the same thing every time, which makes it appear as though you were not listening. Do not belittle what I might feel is sinful. Assure me of God's love for me.
- 6708. Listen with positivity.
- 6709. It takes humility and courage for a person to make herself vulnerable and confess her sins. She is looking for Jesus's mercy and forgiveness. Please put on Jesus when you serve as a confessor.
- 6710. Be patient and helpful so that people will be encouraged to come regularly. Help them to appreciate that this Sacrament will help them get to Heaven. I feel fortunate that all

the priests who have heard my confession have always been gracious and helpful especially since I am a convert and am still learning the prayers and process.

6711. Listen to understand. Don't listen to reply.
6712. Have enough of a grasp of human psychology to help people understand and forgive themselves, even model how to learn to love themselves.
6713. One priest once gave me a Penance, to say the Hail Mary but to replace the "Mary" with my name, and put my children's names in that prayer where Jesus' name was. I never forgot that. I sometimes still do that, to remind me that I can be full of grace and that my now adult children can be blessed too.
6714. Be Christ-like. The penitent is coming to you as a wounded lion. Listen keenly. Do not judge the penitent. Be as lenient as possible.
6715. Be very open and gentle to the person who is confessing.
6716. Be merciful, loving and encouraging.
6717. Listen with empathy and compassion. Help people understand God's unconditional love and how the restoration of ourselves, our relationship with God and with the others happens here – rather than making it feel like a routine or impersonal.
6718. Be a model of the Beatitudes.
6719. Remind us how much God loves us and forgives us.
6720. Treat me like I'm the only penitent you will hear. Don't rush me or just go through the motions. People are at their most vulnerable confessing sins.
6721. More compassion. More empathy. More mercy. More humanity.
6722. Engage deeply and be very present to each individual, gently challenge each person.
6723. Meet each person where he is. Be willing to be with them on their journey. Proclaim God's abiding love.
6724. Remember that those of us who are in confession yearn to be close to God. Do not scare us away with judgment but encourage us to discern the spirits and seek God always. Encourage us to be better. Remind us that it is God's love and warmth that is the greatest pleasure of all. Remind us gently that any separation from God is our own doing and, as such, requires only that we turn back to God. Be the Prodigal Father to us. Welcome us always.
6725. I would remind them if they themselves are not frequenting the sacrament them how can they be a conduit of God's love and tender mercy?
6726. Listen with an open heart and offer words of affirmation.
6727. Place yourself in the shoes of every single person at Confession. People can tell when you're empathetic or not.
6728. Put yourself in my shoes. For many people, it's hard enough just to go to confession. Please don't ask stupid questions.
6729. Be aware of your tone of voice when speaking to the penitent. Give a thoughtful penance.
6730. People are genuinely afraid to go to Confession. There are those with anxiety and it is very difficult for us to open up and give a good confession. Please be compassionate and merciful to those that cry. Those tears are sometimes out of fear. Help us to feel comfortable and provide tissues.
6731. It can be scary to enter a confessional. Find a way to put the person at ease. This is a powerful sacrament. It might be good to educate Catholics today on what this sacrament means. A priest once said with great feeling how privileged he was to hear

confessions. His tenderness when he spoke of the sacrament made me want to go to him for confession. Don't talk more about sin and hell than about a loving God.

6732. Listen without judgment. Understand that the person in front of you might be embarrassed for making a mistake. Allow people the grace of generality: do you really need to know the details of sexual sin? Allow people the opportunity to confess with privacy: not everyone is comfortable with face-to-face. Realize that you are still a human being, and that you sin, too.
6733. Solemnity. Silence. Advice.
6734. Remind people every time that they are beloved children of God.
6735. Be truthful about sin, but speak with hope and joy.
6736. Remind us we are never alone.
6737. I would thank you first. Your ministry is vital to the church and you are brave to face the worst side of humanity every day. Then I would simply say: Don't rush the prayer of absolution. It's beautiful! I love hearing those words spoken over me. A warm welcome to the penitent goes a long way as well.
6738. Stop with the platitudes. Give sound advice and relevant penances. Saying ten rosaries will not make me love the neighbor I hate.
6739. Open yourselves to experience the sacrament more profoundly.
6740. Sorry that people do not commit big exciting sins. But we are bothered by enough guilt in life as it is. I, for one, need mercy, not a bad homily in the confessional.
6741. Truly listen. It's hard and awkward to be vulnerable. Don't preach from the pulpit fire and brimstone to scare people to go to confession because that leads to scrupulosity and doesn't really deepen anyone's internal relationship with God, even if outwardly they show actions of being devout. Make the penance be something someone can grow from, and not just a canned set of prayers you dole out as punishment. We struggle to trust in God's mercy. Help us to believe. We struggle to forgive ourselves. Help us to allow ourselves to see the efficacy of absolution.
6742. Show compassion. Listen. Don't just give 10 Hail Mary's. Have a conversation. Remind us of Christ's mercy and love. I don't feel loved by the Church; too often I feel judged by it.
6743. Be welcoming. Let me know that you are also human. Put on Christ.
6744. Remind me to use clear terms for the sin and not make excuses. I grew up Protestant and have been a Catholic since 2019. I am thankful that God established this Sacrament.
6745. Sometimes we seek solace, understanding, compassion. Promoting acts of mercy as penance is far more healing.
6746. It takes great courage to sit with someone and admit you have failed. We seek an affirmation that through Christ's suffering, death and resurrection we are forgiven. We need to be reminded of that when the world swallows us up.
6747. Be mindful how nervous we are and be compassionate. Listen to what is confessed and provide individual counsel — not therapy but some guidance to help us change.
6748. Treat women as equal to men.
6749. Be merciful and compassionate. Encourage. Say the right words.
6750. Express that you are glad in some way the person is there. Some priests smile, others give a head nod, others say "hello" and "goodbye." I just want to feel like a sinner talking to another sinner who speaks for God.

6751. Under no circumstance degrade the penitent.
6752. Have different penances. Do not rush confession or keep us in there forever. Provide opportunities to come to Reconciliation. Even if few people come, never stop giving us the chance.
6753. Take seriously the fact you are in persona Christi, as I, the recipient of Christ's mercy and grace, need to believe it.
6754. Try to acknowledge the humanity of the person sitting before you. Don't roll your eyes when they come into your confessional. Try to keep your judgment under wraps. The persons coming to confession have already probably judged themselves harshly.
6755. Listen without judgment.
6756. Please try to be a healer rather than a rule-enforcer. Please know that when people come to you for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, they are bringing you some of their most painful and raw moments, showing you that woundedness. You have the chance to help them heal from that wound in a way they might never be able to heal without your help. You really can be miraculous healers.
6757. Try to focus on each individual as an individual. This is difficult perhaps if you're hearing lots of confessions at a stretch. Don't rush through the words of absolution; pronounce them clearly and with a sense of their meaning.
6758. Be an active listener, not a "hurry get on with your list" type of priest. Care enough to provide insight and direction. Proclaim the faith; do not make us feel good about our sinfulness. Without being harsh, provide direction to making better choices.
6759. Be patient with us, please. Don't be in a rush. Remember that it sometimes took a lot of courage for us to walk through that door. We look for Jesus in your face and hear him from your mouths. He chose you to represent him. Honor him with your whole heart and do this well. Know that with all that you do and carry daily, you are prayed for, you are appreciated, and you are loved. Thank you for all that you are and do!!
6760. Humanity needs God's mercy. The men serving as priests are not exempt from sinning so humility and acknowledgment that they have the 'scent of the sheep' as Pope Francis has said, is important.
6761. Listen patiently. Validate. Offer a relevant penance.
6762. Speak with clarity about the church's teachings. Pray for the words we need to hear.
6763. Give a warm greeting. Address the issues we face with sage spiritual advice.
6764. Try to remove the fear of one who struggles to come to the sacrament out of embarrassment or fear of repercussions from the confession. Ensure them that they are loved and not remembered by the confessor as a sinner but as a repentant child of God.
6765. Be present. Presence seems to best describe it for me. Presence speaks to both the experiential and the relational which is how I have lived the profundity of encounter. Presence, as in contemplative prayer, is the doorway for the divine. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is experiential, and so be embodied. Be in your heart instead of your mind. We feel the difference.
6766. I would feel more comfortable by just having priests realize that without saying anything, I am at confession because I believe in the mercy of God. I find it very uncomfortable to discuss personal matters with strangers. I would ask priest-confessors to give reassurance that God loves and forgives without having to delineate too much the details of our sins.

6767. Give advice. Try to guide in a pragmatic way. Life is hard. Give examples from real life.
6768. Help the person making the confession to feel loved and accepted. It's very hard to tell someone the bad things you've done. It's so vulnerable. Help them to know God loves them and truly forgives them. Tell them it's okay to let their sins go.
6769. Meet those making confession with joy, love, inclusion, acceptance, and a strong theological grounding. Celebrate the fact that this person truly wants to be more holy.
6770. There are inescapable gender dynamics at play in the confessional. God's mercy sees us for who we are, in our fullness as human persons and with recognition of our gender and the struggles we encounter due to that experience of gender, and I think when a confessor practices awareness of the power dynamics someone might encounter in her daily life, he can be a better minister of the unconditional yet specific love of God. What I mean to say is, young women are always surrounded by the judgment of older men who make rules for them. What changes in the confessional is that a situation where we disclose our failures to a man is elevated in terms of its eternal stakes – this is our soul we're talking about – and the meaning of the encounter is heightened. We're disclosing to God via the priest. I can therefore perceive God's mercy more clearly if it is unencumbered by any judgments or misogyny the priest might harbor. Believe me, we can tell if you don't like women. I go to confession because I believe in God's mercy and love, not because I like the priest, but I've encountered a lot of priests who really need to check themselves and their language and re-evaluate their posture toward the interior and spiritual lives of women.
6771. Engage. Don't judge. Don't scold! Show the love of Jesus. If a sin is repeated over and over the Priest needs to address it. May God forgive the priests who don't make confession more available. Whatever and however a Priest receives the absolution of other priests, he needs to reflect that kind of treatment to others. What was his best experience? That's the experience he needs to share in the sacrament.
6772. Put yourself in the penitents' shoes.
6773. Don't judge, just listen and be humble.
6774. Have a pastoral yet friendly presence. Listen well. Familiarize yourself with common family matters.
6775. Please remember that I hear God's forgiveness through you. If you are mean about it, I think that's what God must feel about me.
6776. Please know that for me just getting to confession is a big deal. I have real fear of going but I do seek forgiveness. A kind heart from the priest makes all the difference. I know I am a sinner. I'm looking to do better but not be shamed.
6777. Offer sound spiritual advice and direction and don't make it feel like a drive through confessional. Pray for a penance that helps to combat the sin or struggle we're going through.
6778. Be Christ to the penitents.
6779. Offer confession to individuals when it is requested.
6780. Know that when a person approaches you, she already knows she's sinned and feels bad. Be welcoming, patient and accepting.
6781. It takes courage for someone to go to confession; be gentle while someone is being so vulnerable. Remember they are there for Christ's mercy. You are just a conduit.

6782. Continue always in kindness and love even as you speak truth about sins. If possible, show a path of hope for ways to go forth and not continue in sin. Obviously, receiving merciful absolution is paramount. Thank you all for providing this miraculous and beautiful sacrament to me throughout my life!
6783. Give a concrete suggestion for growth in a particular area.
6784. Be merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful.
6785. Don't be rote or automatic. Be patient. Know how much this can mean to the penitent if the experience exudes mercy with sound wisdom and prayerful accompaniment.
6786. If you advertise confessions, be there on time. Don't ask us if there are any more sins. Some of us have a hard time remembering the Act of Contrition and have learned older versions.
6787. Practice listening to what is actually being stated.
6788. Thank you for your priesthood. Thank you for being in persona Christi in the Confessional. You are God's instrument, and my heart is touched that Jesus is right there working through you to impart His love, His mercy, His Grace. What great blessings! Thank you for saying yes to God. Deo Gratias.
6789. The Sacrament of Penance is the Tribunal of Mercy, but don't neglect Justice. Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution.
6790. Understand who I am, and offer God's love and forgiveness
6791. Be open and nonjudgmental. Engage with the penitent as a person who is more than his shortcomings.
6792. After confessing my sins, I would appreciate some guidance. Don't go right to what my penance is. Rather than Our Fathers and Hail Marys, give a penance that is more meaningful and more 21st century.
6793. Listen. Truly listen. Ask questions for clarification. Do not be the priest who turns a parishioner permanently away from the sacrament.
6794. Be compassionate.
6795. Relax. Create the openness for the Holy Spirit to move. If the person is unsure of what to say or do, don't be afraid to move off the strict prescriptive script. For me as I started to confess, it was uncomfortable to be dictated what to say, with my sin being the only non-scripted portion. This was sometimes more uncomfortable when I struggled along with what to do or say next and the priest seemed to have all his responses memorized. The confessors who allowed more freedom reflected more profoundly to me the openness of God's mercy. Except of course absolution itself, it is very comforting that this is unchanged and always freely given.
6796. A lot of people (including myself at one point) are nervous about confession so to provide a kind and supportive atmosphere is so important!
6797. Truly listen with compassion. It may be the first time that person has had the courage to come to confess. You may only have this one opportunity to bring them back into the fold.
6798. Listen carefully in order to offer spiritual advice that helps the penitent grow in his or her love of Jesus. And know that your brothers and sisters in Christ are praying for you and your intentions. Your service to Jesus and his Church are deeply appreciated.
6799. Please be gentle, kind, humble.
6800. Recognize the vulnerability and humanity of those confessing, and the opportunity you have to ignite or strengthen a desire for coming to confession again.

*Merciful Like the Father*

6801. Don't be too "clerical." Listen. Empathize.
6802. Be caring and offer guidance.
6803. Engage the penitent a little or a lot if the Spirit moves.
6804. Listen. Don't rush me through. Give me a reading or a tangible suggestion of how I can effect meaningful change. Smile. Encourage me for having come and let me know you are speaking with love and understanding.
6805. This is a sacrament, not a chore or checklist. Most of us are taking this seriously and coming with heavy hearts and vulnerability in our confession. If we are met with brusque and irritated attitudes, if we are given advice that is contrary to church doctrine, or if we are shamed and chastised, please reconsider your calling to the priesthood.
6806. Don't forget the sin. Teach about God's justice and then meet us with God's mercy.
6807. Relate biblical examples of Jesus' forgiveness.
6808. Consider not just specific actions but also the penitent's life circumstances, attitudes and desire for reconciliation.
6809. Jesus always lifted up the individual and made the person realize his worth and dignity. He certainly told them to sin no more, but he always showed compassion and sinners walked away having experienced the love of God. I can't say that always happens in the confessional.
6810. Acknowledge what I am saying so I know that you are listening. Use corporal works of mercy for penances more to have people make amends through service. Assign a Gospel reading instead of rote prayers.
6811. Be patient. Offer more time for confession. Never underestimate talking about God's infinite mercy.
6812. The only advice I would give is to stay strong. The world needs confession so desperately. It is so vital and we need more. However boring or frustrating or hard or easy or rewarding, please keep hearing them. We need forgiveness again and again and again. And we are grateful for our priests allowing Jesus to work through them to forgive our sins. Thank you!
6813. Use it as a small opportunity to form lay people. Quote the scriptures, talk about the doctrine of sin both mortal and venial, instruct and coach!
6814. Think and act like Jesus.
6815. Pay more attention to the restoration of relationships than the sin. Help people to move forward with reconciling with the community as a step towards God.
6816. Don't judge. Listen.
6817. Assure me of God's love and mercy. Don't tell me who's excluded from His love and mercy – which might be me or the penitent God wants to draw to you.
6818. Listen to the penitent and take your time responding to what they say. Ask for clarification, if need be. Give a penance that is more than three Hail Mary's, maybe something the person can work on.
6819. You don't have to have all the answers. Mercy is the answer, not always advice.
6820. Be kind. Remember it's not yourself, but Christ hearing, healing, and forgiving.
6821. If this is really about God's forgiveness and love, you need to help people feel forgiveness and help them forgive themselves, not make them feel judged. If someone is clearly struggling to go through the process of getting the words out, they've

already done a lot of penance. A heavy penance doesn't make sense for someone for whom just getting in the door was a major hurdle.

6822. Be a shepherd, not a hired hand. Confession not just serving a function. There is only one person coming to confession at a time. Pay full attention. Listen to him or her and respond as Christ would.
6823. A prayer life is super important for anyone, particularly a Confessor.
6824. If you feel like you're going through the motions, remember that even though you may hear a dozen confessions that day or more, for each person, that's the only confession they'll make. It is super important to them.
6825. Sometimes when someone goes to confession it is because they feel horrible about themselves. The priest can point out what is good about them before turning how to fix the less good things.
6826. Listen carefully and give me good spiritual guidance.
6827. Do not be too light when it comes to penance.
6828. Mercy first. Truth always.
6829. Show caring and understanding.
6830. Stop being "The Church." Instead be humble and nonjudgmental.
6831. Emphasize the sacrament outside of confession times. If you offer confessions for 30 minutes before each Mass consistently, you will see a huge change in your parish. As a parent, I spend countless hours of seemingly wasted time making myself available to my kids so that when an important conversation comes up, my kids know I am available. Similarly priests will never know when someone needs to experience God's mercy so they should be readily available. Finally, the most important part of the experience of confession is to know that you are forgiven no matter what you have done. Each priest should use the gifts God gave him to bring that mercy while never forgetting that he are only an instrument.
6832. Is there any way to make confession more convenient, to offer a variety of times as some people work different shifts?
6833. Perhaps the Act of Contrition could be printed on a card or pamphlet to guide us. Not everyone has memorized it.
6834. Please understand how difficult confession is for people, especially those who have anxiety and depression. Do all you can to be tender.
6835. Never judge those confessing. Show the mercy and love God expects you to show.
6836. Don't try to advise me because you don't understand my life. Stick to mercy. When confessors give advice, it's normally from young priests who are well-intentioned but kind of clueless.
6837. When giving homilies, writing blogs, or thinking, think about how what you say might make someone feel about the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If you are frequently judgmental when you preach, people who have real sins may be afraid to seek the Sacrament.
6838. Listen deeply to the person who is confessing and tailor both spiritual guidance as well as the penance to the individual.
6839. Don't set yourself up as a therapist. Keep the line moving. Use the Ritual and don't make up invalid forms of the Sacrament. Nobody goes to confession for your special personal touch. Just be a priest.

*Merciful Like the Father*

6840. Stop acting like a judge! If possible, take a course or a degree in counseling. Please don't act as if you're God, but imitate the mercy of the true God.
6841. Make the connection for me between where I am and how I can connect better with God going forward.
6842. I've never had a bad experience of confession, so I would just say keep in mind that you are Jesus in that confessional and act as He would.
6843. Don't excuse the person of their confessed sins.
6844. Listen first before you judge. Pray before you begin so as not to feel overwhelmed and suffer burnout. Parishes should ensure that priests take breaks among hours of confession for this reason.
6845. Be friendly. The person may already feel bad. Don't make him or her feel worse.
6846. You are not God. You are his vessel and have no right to judge.
6847. A half hour on Saturday afternoons before the vigil Mass tells young and old that this is not a priority. In a perfect world, the invitation to make an appointment thing might work, but the confidentiality of a screen can encourage us to make use of the Sacrament.
6848. Ask questions and remind us that God loves us.
6849. Accept a sincere confession from anyone who arrives, without much comment, unless the penitent requests it and you are capable of offering something of merit.
6850. Please don't be discouraged. Confession is so important!
6851. Meet everyone where he or she is, no matter the age, gender, station in life, and so forth.
6852. Please have more patience. Help us through anxiety and nervousness; don't ignore it. Please talk to us as friends. Add personal touches and experience to it to calm us. Please give more creative, personal penances. My regular confessor has given me movies to watch, people to talk to, places to go, specific Bible passages to read and meditate on, unique prayers to do, and other things.
6853. Try to make the experience more like a conversation than an inquisition or a simple listing of sins.
6854. Patience and holiness.
6855. Emphasize and reassure: As far as the East is from the West. Forgiveness is hard to accept.
6856. Be welcoming and supportive.
6857. Remember that abortion is not the only sin.
6858. Make it easy. Guilt is there before the person walks in the door
6859. Give me a meaningful penance. Tell me to apologize to someone I've hurt or to do a good act to someone who seems to feel left out by others. Encourage me to form habits when I'm tempted to sin, like to pull off the road anytime another driver makes me angry so that I take just a minute to remind myself that he too is a much loved child of God, and to pray for him before I continue in my way.
6860. Most of us get nervous about reconciliation. I do. just need a friendly smile and a message that all will be ok. I know God loves us, but we need to hear it anyway. When a priest says it after confession it's awesome.
6861. Try not to have a group of people going at the same time, so that we feel that we have to hurry and get through out of courtesy for the next one in line.

6862. Please hear me and respond to my spiritual concerns. A personal connection means so much.
6863. Give some certainty, some confidence to the person seeking reconciliation. Empower us. I usually feel lost and insecure when I seek reconciliation.
6864. Make sure that you hear the person and do not just give stock answers.
6865. Someone told me to ask my guardian angel to help the priest's guardian angel give me good counsel and to help understand my heart. It helps!
6866. Be attentive, don't hesitate to press the penitent for full revelation, give advice and spiritual direction, and give a real penance.
6867. Take your time to understand the complexity of each person's situation. If someone is in confession, they want to do better, but struggle for some reason.
6868. Never be reluctant to give practical advice on how to grow in faith. The sin of pride is my heaviest burden. My confessor suggested that I repeat the prayer "God, help me purify my intentions" as I begin my day, start a meeting or conversation, or even just draft an email. This has been immensely helpful and keeps me connected to God throughout the day.
6869. We are definitely looking for guidance on how to stop sinning. If you believe more time is needed, recommend a penitent to schedule a time.
6870. If possible, have a list of Catholic therapists at the ready, if someone's mental health is affecting his or her spiritual health.
6871. Be kind. If face-to-face, really look at the person.
6872. Let your love for a compassionate God show through your responses.
6873. Love Jesus.
6874. Don't rush someone. Listen carefully. Don't ask too personal information like age or details of sexual things. Be especially kind and helpful to gay people. It's hard enough to be gay and Catholic.
6875. Be welcoming and remember that many of us are very fragile, fearful and ashamed. One penance I found fruitful and comforting was to pray that someone out there who needed absolution would seek the sacrament and to ponder that the reason I had the courage to come to confession may have been because someone, somewhere had similarly prayed for me.
6876. Be relatable and fully human. Jesus told people their sins are forgiven, go and sin no more and dined with sinners, knowing their sins but engaging with them beyond their sins, showing the value of each person to God.
6877. I was not taught how to go to confession. I have seen many videos on how to make a good confession. But I am always nervous I'll make a mistake. Please be kind.
6878. If you view lay people as people with a "lower" level of faith and a lesser discipleship than your own, please just don't preside at this sacrament at all. Also, please don't go beyond your level of expertise in the advice you give people.
6879. Welcome the penitent. Listen! Make eye contact. Be aware of the body language of the penitent. Encourage. Speak of God's mercy. Ask questions. Help the penitent identify the sin, not just tell a story. The priest should guide the penitent if needed to identify and to name the sin. That has helped me so much. Thank you and God bless your work.
6880. Understand how hard it is to get to confession. Perhaps offer more penance services for people uncomfortable with confession.

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6881. I would feel better if you would provide a little more guidance and patience when I struggle during confession.
6882. Some of the best confessions I've had included suggested follow up with community resources. Be familiar with the resources in your area and practice offering them in open, nonjudgmental ways.
6883. Emphasize the forgiveness that God provides.
6884. If people are coming to confession, they already know they are not acting their best. No need to pile on more guilt. Sometimes just listen and be kind and God will do the heavy lifting.
6885. Pay attention to what I'm saying and struggling with and offer advice on how not to keep committing the same sins.
6886. Offer and promote frequent confession. Please preach about the importance of confession before receiving the Eucharist.
6887. Help me know what to say. Make it a conversation.
6888. Make this an adult conversation. I feel that sometimes I am eight years old again.
6889. Engage in dialogue with the penitent.
6890. Give insight, guidance and advice on how to avoid sin.
6891. See things from the person's point of view to build a better connection.
6892. Recognize that it's all grace. Help us when we fail and assist us to do what's right.
6893. Put yourself in the shoes of the penitent. Do your very best to understand what was behind the sins. Listen patiently. Love us as Jesus loves us, without any hint of judgment, just love and mercy.
6894. Never sell people short or expect that they cannot overcome a certain sin. Do not tell us we are not sinning when the Church clearly tells us that a certain action is sinful. Be honest with us on what the Church teaches.
6895. Never forget we are "God's Children."
6896. Remind us in the confessional that we all sin, priests too, and that it's wonderful that the person confessing has chosen to come. That goes a long way to ease discomfort and nerves! For scrupulous people, remind us "Those sins are gone, go live like it" goes a long way, too.
6897. Talk about God's mercy. Offer ideas to the individual to help change a behavior.
6898. Put penitents at ease. So many of us are nervous in confession. Please be timely for those of us waiting. Please encourage those who want to make longer confessions to make an appointment.
6899. Don't judge. You don't know whole story.
6900. You have an extraordinary power to sit in judgment over others in the place of God. Walk carefully and respectfully and never trample over people's inmost pain.
6901. Listen! Let the penitent know that you are listening! Be brief and concise.
6902. I know it's hard not to know what the person is going through or where he or she is at in the faith journey, but an attitude of encouragement and acceptance would be helpful.
6903. Look us in the eye. Listen. Give us something other than a Hail Mary or Our Father to say. It's not enough, and I'm not five years old!
6904. Remember that it's called reconciliation for a reason. Also please never forget that we appreciate you!

6905. Remember the person before you has been created in the image of God and is loved by God despite his or her failings. Bless each penitent with God's tender mercy. So many Catholics I know have been deeply wounded in the confessional. Please consider offering reconciliation services for those wounded souls to make it easier for them to return to God's mercy.
6906. Be kind.
6907. Be patient and kind, especially to children confessing for the first time.
6908. Help people start from grace: to understand that they are loved tremendously by God and that "confession" isn't the same as punishment or humiliation, but rather an opportunity to be fully honest in the light of God's love and to grow closer to one's true self as God's child.
6909. Be kind. People are already scared, afraid, ashamed. Be loving and provide guidance.
6910. If you must go beyond the sacrament itself, try your hardest to irradiate the sins of your parishioners and of yourselves most of all.
6911. Please pray for mercy and a listening heart, like God!
6912. As a woman, I often don't think you get me. Please don't use stereotypical life conditions. Many of us run large organizations and struggle making decisions and choices outside of our traditional roles.
6913. Be empathetic, be kind, and please try to be informed about what daily life is like in society for lay people. And please do not be political or party-friendly. Temptations to sin are multi partisan!
6914. Listen. Really listen. Please don't be mechanical about going through the steps of confession. Relate and see the person confessing as human. Be encouraging.
6915. Consider kneeling before an image of the crucified Christ and gaze upon his wounds. I did this for many hours over a three-year period as a preteen. I learned that no matter how much I cried about my suffering, it could never compare to what Jesus did for us. He knows every pain that anyone has ever felt. He understands. He gives us His Grace to be able to withstand the sometimes devastating agony of our life on this earth. There is nothing that we can do to change His Love for us. Our sorrow and sincere approach for his healing is all that he asks of us. Thank you for asking.
6916. Try to understand where the penitent is coming from.
6917. Be gentle yet firm in the Truth. Stay close to Our Lady.
6918. Be welcoming. Show compassion. Don't try to be a know it all. Be a guide. Be encouraging. We are seeking guidance and help.
6919. You wear a stole to show that this is not just a simple talk. But don't be pompous, presuming you're closer to God than the person coming to confession. Please don't throw the Catechism into our faces, especially anything related to sexuality, because using the truth as a weapon can cause a big deal of harm to people!
6920. Pray for the person confessing. Give them Spirit-led guidance and advice. Make the penance relevant. Be kind.
6921. Be like the sacrament you are trying to facilitate.
6922. Have more confession times, preferably before every Mass. Make it a priority. Communicate the seriousness of sin and the need to be right with God.
6923. Have the penance fit the sin. For example if I overeat, my penance should include abstaining from the food I overate for a week or two.

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6924. Be aware of the human nature of sin, and give positive reinforcement, focusing on God's love and mercy
6925. Tell us during Mass not to be afraid of confession and why it is so important. Explain to us what the sacrament is. Many of us don't even know what mortal sins are and that we must confess them to receive the Eucharist.
6926. Be humble. Listen. Be helpful. Many people commit sins that they are not proud of and sometimes haunted by them. A good priest can help unburden us to live a better life and have reconciliation.
6927. Try to help the person who is uncomfortable confessing his sins to feel more at ease.
6928. Don't make the laity feel worse. There is already pain and mistrust because of the sex abuse scandals.
6929. It is helpful when the priest presents a warm and inviting intake, to make the penitent feel at ease. Many people believe that since God is everywhere, there is no need for a confession. To help address this, priests should be welcoming and forgiving, not stern and harsh.
6930. Welcoming.
6931. Acknowledge our status as beloved sinners. Listen with compassion.
6932. Be kind and patient. We all do the best we can. Meet us where we are.
6933. Be kind. Be honest. Be encouraging. Be like Jesus.
6934. Don't rush through Confession. Please listen and speak as if there's no one waiting in line. Isn't that what Jesus would have done? Isn't that what Padre Pio was known for? Make the person feel as if he or she is the only one.
6935. Months ago I went to confession and I told Father how crabby I've been. Father said, "It's Covid. Everyone is crabby." He made me smile because he was a realist. Another priest gave me a psalm to read for a week and I loved that, too.
6936. If a penitent is going face-to-face, be face-to-face and nonjudgmental. Be caring, kind, attentive and truly listening.
6937. Please listen to the Holy Spirit's prompting, to go beyond what is apparent.
6938. Enter into the moment with the penitent. Always encourage, since it takes a lot of courage to go to confession. Leave us with someone to ponder, whether relating to the specific confession or the general idea of confession and living life fully, even with mistakes.
6939. If a parishioner tells you something in confidence, protect that confidence as if it were said in the confessional. If the priest is a gossip, people won't trust the seal of confession and will stay away.
6940. Remember how hard it is to admit sins and faults. Come from the place of God's love and mercy rather than being ready with a lecture or tips to improve one's spiritual life.
6941. Help people see it as a joyful sacrament.
6942. Have an understanding for people like myself with mental illnesses and help make reconciliation more accessible for us.
6943. Give some kind of advice or a prayer that might help me say, "Wow. I never thought of that." For example, I was asked to pray to the Holy Spirit daily and it helps.
6944. Never yell or scream at the person. A few people I know have told me that has happened to them and they have sadly never gone back.

6945. Speak of Jesus' love. Assure us of his mercy. Be cognizant of the spiritual gifts in each penitent and gently call those gifts forth as so many have no idea they are grace filled.
6946. Really listen and offer encouragement.
6947. Know that it scares a lot of people, so try to make it as pleasant as possible.
6948. Do the sacrament well, thoughtfully and sensitively. That's more than enough. There's no need to play therapist.
6949. I do appreciate all the compassionate priests I've had and feel like I've been very fortunate to get them. But I would say: give more prayer-filled penances. Sometimes I think I get off top easy.
6950. Relate to us human-to-human because I tend to question and doubt a fair amount of the time and I am not up for a smack down on what the Catechism says. I look for honest guidance, nurturing, and support from a relatable human who has the humility not to judge.
6951. Remember your role as the instrument that God has chosen to hear my confession. Don't be a robot; rather, be human and act as Jesus would.
6952. Listen carefully and ask questions if it seems appropriate.
6953. Listening to another's story is a blessing. I appreciate you for doing it!
6954. Please educate your parishioners what the Sacrament means and make people feel comfortable going to it, not as a mandate to avoid going to hell. Try to make it a loving conversation with God rather than a ritual. Help people to talk to God in the act of contrition. Be accessible, especially for those with disabilities. Give us time without worrying excessively about the line.
6955. Think about your own experiences and apply them to others, with love and mercy for us. And thank you.
6956. Be the face of Jesus to us. Don't be dismissive. Be creative in giving penances. The Our Fathers and Hail Marys don't cut it.
6957. Do your best to stay engaged. While some confessions are surely more "benign" than others, staying engaged lets the person know you're understanding their heavy hearts and their need to unburden.
6958. Be friendly and not regimented.
6959. Follow the rite. Include Scripture.
6960. Listen, pray and love your penitents.
6961. Be humble and pastoral.
6962. Really listen. You may hear dozens of confession at a time and may have heard it all, but it is really hard to lay bare our hearts. It's like surgery. The doctor has done the procedure for years and thinks nothing of it and may be callous, but it's the patient's first time on the table. Be the good physician who explains, comforts and is empathetic.
6963. Emphasize how much God loves us, regardless of anything we may have done. Be compassionate. Act like you have all the time in the world, even though you don't. Don't judge or condemn.
6964. Sometimes people don't participate in the Sacrament because they observe how some priests treat God's people in the parish, on the parish staff, in the wider community and don't see mercy but a "big show." Who the priest is has a big role in how big his confession line is.

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6965. Accept people where they are. If the person is confessing something, it is important to him.
6966. Be human!
6967. Reference a verse from Sacred Scripture.
6968. Please, father, it's not about you. Sometimes a priest can just get talking and talking and you aren't really sure where he is even going with his stories; as the penitent, you're just like, "Okay, please get to absolution now." If the Holy Spirit isn't insisting that you say something, just keep the stories or anecdotes to yourself. Keep the focus on God's action and his love and mercy.
6969. Especially when there is a long line, it is a mercy to move quickly! Sometimes I have really felt God's mercy the most when it the priest just responds, "God loves you," asks me to make the act of contrition, and gives absolution.
6970. Pay humble attention to the spiritual gifts each penitent has. With gentle observation, empower each penitent to taste God's love and recognize how filled with grace they are. Assure them of God's mercy and love. Speak of Jesus' love.
6971. Let them be heard and understood as a person.
6972. Healing trumps penance.
6973. We are all people who are living hard lives. Some people don't go to therapy but may feel helpful to get some real practical quick advice on how to handle difficult sins
6974. Be pastoral, a good listener and reflector, oriented to reconciliation with God, oneself and others. If you wish to punish, work as a prison guard.
6975. Try to remember the fear and discomfort you experienced as a child before confession. Many adult Catholics still feel this way. Treat them with patience and kindness so that they feel comfortable coming.
6976. Don't be so formal. Allow it to be more of a conversation rather than a formality. Embody our merciful and loving God.
6977. Be in the confessional at the published times, be welcoming, and make it easy. Don't take for granted we know how the confessional lights work, which side is face-to-face, etc.
6978. Don't be judgmental.
6979. Compassion.
6980. A good confessor responds to the sins. A great confessor responds to the sinner.
6981. Have an Act of Contrition handy.
6982. Really hear the people and offer them comfort.
6983. Be humble and open to the person confessing. Be nonjudgmental for those who haven't been to confession for a while.
6984. Be sympathetic, ask questions, say things that comfort, and let me know when I have made a good confession. Talk to me as Jesus would.
6985. Don't rush. Listen carefully. Give a thoughtful penance.
6986. Be fully present and focused. Realize there is a unique human with a story in front of you who may be scared or nervous or embarrassed, that what you do and say carries immense weight, that you are representing the mercy of Christ. Do not rush. Be with each person to the best of your ability, realizing that for you, this may be one of hundreds, but to that person, it's their only experience in that moment to encounter Christ.
6987. Let the person who is confessing to you know that you are actually listening.

6988. Have the experience feel more “human.” I don't want to speak to what seems like a robot.
6989. Do not act one way in the confessional and then act like a jerk otherwise. It impacts whether people will come.
6990. Most people feel lonely and afraid and inadequate, especially in the confessional. Be aware of that and be a good listener. Talk often to your community – teens, moms at all stages of parenting, elderly, etc. – to be aware of what is going on locally and what the realities are. It will help you understand better the context of confessions.
6991. Be prepared to listen carefully! Those who do go to confession are often fragile and in need of understanding to move forward towards a closer relationship to God! The best confessors are aware of the importance of sharing and forgiveness conveyed!
6992. Priests are there as intermediaries, not as the divine judge.
6993. In terms of decision making on what type of penance to give, I'd allow more time for prayer during the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to ensure helpful direction is given.
6994. I like when the priest is joyful!
6995. Eliminate the barriers that keep people from coming back to church, because those same barriers might even be keeping Mass-goers from going to confession.
6996. Be merciful and find a way to shine some light in the darkness.
6997. Be compassionate. You have no idea what some people are going through in daily life. Your words and actions can be evangelizing or could turn people away from the sacrament.
6998. If possible, have more priests available during times a lot of people will want to confess so the wait isn't as long. Listen to what the person is expressing because that is what God has put on their heart to confess and don't get sidetracked. A side point: Not all women have regular monthly cycles and so just proposing NFP as a panacea to women who have used contraception is not adequate.
6999. Listen.
7000. Deepening your prayer life will always make you a better confessor.
7001. Remind us of the value and purpose of confessing.
7002. Meet us where we are and make us want to come back. If someone doesn't go often, welcome him and be glad he is there now rather than castigating him for not going often enough.
7003. Listen, respond and model God's love.
7004. The same thing that we say about the Eucharist also applies to reconciliation. It is not a sacramental reward for saints but medicine for sinners. Be merciful as our heavenly father is merciful.
7005. Please always have the cheat sheet words available for penitents. I have memory issues and became Catholic as an adult, so it's a struggle to recall sentences and prayers not learned as a child.
7006. Listen carefully to the penitent. She may be saying more than what you hear out loud.
7007. Speak directly to the person and her situation. Stay away from formulaic statements and mechanical prayers.
7008. Truly listen and counsel the penitent so that the penitent desires to go forth, do penance, and truly amend his or her lives.
7009. Listen, don't preach. Strive to bring healing to the person. Don't condemn. Make the penitent know he or she is loved by God.

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- 7010. Show a compassionate and welcoming attitude that gives the person the opportunity to open up. Understand that for some of us it's not easy to share painful information
- 7011. Be genuine. Be kind. Be helpful. Yes, be helpful! Maybe suggest more appropriate penances than three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys. Why should prayer be a penance? You will change some people's lives. Know that!
- 7012. Don't ask questions.
- 7013. What is said and inferred outside the confessional is important! One must be compassionate in demeanor and demonstrate love for people to draw people to confession.
- 7014. Be more merciful. Always.
- 7015. Think of me as your beloved mother or younger sister who is reaching out for help in being a better person.
- 7016. Be a good listener and give clear directive feedback.
- 7017. Don't listen mainly for the sin, but for how you can help.
- 7018. Express God's love and desire for our return.
- 7019. Place yourselves in the shoes of the penitent. Empathize with them and don't be judgmental.
- 7020. Don't worry so much about "rules" but about people's lives and how to help them live through a lens of faith.
- 7021. Make the person feel comfortable.
- 7022. Help us to understand the depth of love God has for us.
- 7023. Don't act like your goal is to move people out quickly.
- 7024. Be merciful as Christ is.
- 7025. Project a sense of joy when praying the prayer of absolution. Be encouraging. Try not to look bored.
- 7026. People are going to confession because they already feel bad. They need encouragement and kindness in that extremely vulnerable moment. Treating it as just another person coming through the line feels like it's a waste of the person's time.
- 7027. Please reflect Jesus' love and compassion for the sinner but also help the sinner recognize the consequences of his other choices. Offer penances that are meaningful, related to the sins or vices with which the person is struggling.
- 7028. I'd like a real conversation, a sense that the priest has some interest in me and what might be bothering me. The priests to whom I've gone almost never have a real conversation in the confessional. I don't think Jesus would be as remote.
- 7029. Challenge your penitents lovingly. And please do not change the words of absolution prescribed by the Church!
- 7030. How important it is to differentiate the role of confessor from a spiritual director or counselor.
- 7031. Listen more. Talk less.
- 7032. Consider the pain of the people coming to Confession before addressing any sin as enumerated by the Church. And pray before addressing it.
- 7033. Just listen. There is more to the story.
- 7034. Calmness, little judgment, openness.
- 7035. It's okay to receive penitents with a smile. It's a welcoming gesture. As we arrive sometimes nervous or with moral pain to confession, a smile reminds us that God, who is love and mercy, is receiving us with joy.

- 7036. Don't be mechanical about how you celebrate the rite. Be thoughtful about the penance. Ask open-ended questions if you need more info.
- 7037. Remind us that we are loved by God, that God's love is always there. Most confessors today are kind and the days of yelling at us are in the past. It's okay to provide tough love, however, and to tell the penitent directly how to avoid a particular sin and do better.
- 7038. Listen more, talk less, be encouraging and positive.
- 7039. Confession does not have to take long, but it does require active listening and empathy. Don't assume or presume. Maybe ask a follow-up question, because you might guide us to a revelation we hadn't yet reached about our lives.
- 7040. It's not about you. Say and do less so that God can say and do more.
- 7041. Ask if I knew when I sinned. Ask if I can figure out how to avoid it. Ask me about how I might focus on being good.
- 7042. Remind me that as a Christian and Catholic I have already been saved and that confession is a chance to stay on my path of seeking Him. This has often been lost in my years of confession and some times confession has taken a castigatory tone.
- 7043. Help people develop their conscience and don't be rigid with the rules! Accept people where they are on their faith journey and don't chase them away by an uncaring attitude.
- 7044. Always be merciful and loving and encouraging. Don't be pompous or sound outraged at our sins.
- 7045. Be gentle and kind.
- 7046. Speak words of compassion. Do not threaten.
- 7047. Even though you've chosen not to experience marriage and having children, many of our sins relate to that. So, please, do something to educate yourself in order to have some understanding of these issues. God, after all, does understand us.
- 7048. Humility and acceptance. No laughing, mocking or criticism.
- 7049. Listen, to ask questions and be merciful
- 7050. Be inclusive and please don't assume anything about a person. Never show anger or belittling. I wouldn't have gone to confession again after the first priest raised his voice at me but I'm a practicing Catholic and have come back. I'm glad you are doing this.
- 7051. Be merciful.
- 7052. Be charitable.
- 7053. Remember that you are there as a minister of mercy and to help people heal their broken relationship with God. Focus more on mercy and love than shame and punishment.
- 7054. Don't be judgmental as it causes people not to want to go to confession, and it is particularly damaging to young people who have a desire to confess but then are turned off by a judgmental priest. People should find it a joy to go to confession, not a burden. They surely should not be afraid of confession. Confession should feel like an act of God's love for us.
- 7055. Know that the true process of forgiveness comes through the Holy Spirit.
- 7056. Be compassionate. Your tone of voice is very important. A scolding voice as if you are without sin is so off putting.

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- 7057. Do not give generic advice or generic penances. There are some priests who just say the same thing time after time. It's difficult not to think that he just says the same thing to the next person. The best confessors somehow make it very personal. And amazingly they never repeat themselves.
- 7058. Please offer many more opportunities and times for your parish to go to the Sacrament of Confession, and encourage everyone to go to confession at least once a month.
- 7059. Sit up straight and be engaged. Show that you're interested and happy to be there. Don't guilt people into going to confession during your homilies. Be welcoming and not so formal.
- 7060. Make eye contact and ask a question or two or make a comment to let the person know you are listening.
- 7061. God's mercy is part of his never-ending love for his creation. God loves us beyond our imagination.
- 7062. Show kindness and don't jam us in before Mass.
- 7063. Give words of encouragement for our continuing effort to change.
- 7064. Confession makes an amazing difference in our lives. Thank you.
- 7065. Be Christ to them. Show that you care. Help them in this way to go out forgiven, with a firm disposition to never sin again.
- 7066. Listen more. Talk less. Encourage more. Blame less.
- 7067. Be humble. Honest. Not holier than thou.
- 7068. Engage in conversation, listen deeply and put at ease.
- 7069. Practice Mercy yourselves. Some folks in the confessional have delayed going because they are afraid of snickering or laughing when they talk about their sins, or, worse, shock or condemnation.
- 7070. Sometimes the greatest act of courage is to go to confession.
- 7071. Please make each person feel as if her confession is the only one you are hearing, that she is valued and respected.
- 7072. At least once a month please be present for prolonged confession hours. Maybe rotate among nearby churches.
- 7073. Truly listen. If you are having an off day, do not offer confessions. Act like you want to be there to help the person draw closer to God. Be there for them and think about the penance. Don't just give a Hail Mary and Our Father.
- 7074. Come from a position of love.
- 7075. Understand that my sins are a concern to me even if they might not seem very serious. Help me to understand how I can grow and do better.
- 7076. Encourage people to bring in notes or guides to help them make a good confession. Consider how you model Christ's love and mercy in all areas of church life, not just during the Sacraments.
- 7077. Get away from laundry list confessions. Focus on what is stopping the penitent from loving and accepting God's love. Stop treating the "penance" as if it were paying a traffic fine.
- 7078. Make eye contact. Ask questions.
- 7079. My most moving experience came when a priest directed me to look at the cross for patience, selflessness and strength.

7080. Take the time to hear what might be behind the words or lists of sins. Speak to the person as Jesus would, give spiritual advice for the person to know that he is loved, forgiven and in the presence of God.
7081. Give me a real penance. I want to do something with substance to show my contrition to God.
7082. Try to give some counsel as opposed to rushing through.
7083. Please be kind when people are in confession. We've already put ourselves out there and feel very exposed. An unkind word will cut so much deeper in that kind of space than you think it might.
7084. Always be very welcoming and assure them they can come back any time. Don't let them think they will go to hell if they don't come back often. God's mercy is always available and let them know that. People should go to Confession out of love, not out of fear!
7085. Listen, listen, listen!
7086. Act in such a way outside of confession that they are seen as approachable. Priests who focus on the trappings of clericalism do not, in my opinion, suggest approachability.
7087. Focus on how to get the sinner to work through the issues they have in committing a particular sin.
7088. Be kind, appreciate it can be hard to go to confession.
7089. Offer a one-minute homily after the sinner has confessed his or her sins, just a quick message of God's infinite love, abounding kindness and gracious mercy.
7090. Don't be trite and dismissive. Be joyful when possible and show the mercy you hope to receive someday.
7091. Listen and help me to feel really forgiven.
7092. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the greatest gift they can give to a person next to the Eucharist. Let go of some of the other business of the Parish to invest more in engaging God's people in this way.
7093. Listen and provides some basic guidance to overcome habitual sins.
7094. Sometimes I want reassurance that God still loves me even though I have issues with a particular sin that I've been struggling with since I was a child.
7095. Never look down on those who sin, even the ones you feel are so simple to deny.
7096. You are acting in persona Christi. Let Christ radiate through you and touch every person. Giving the same speech and pushing everyone through the line quickly, delivering bland absolutions and penances, means that you probably need to schedule longer and more frequent confession times so that it can be more meaningful. Sacraments shouldn't be seen as burdensome.
7097. Listen attentively and spend a bit more time giving counsel.
7098. Sound judgments and advice are necessary, remembering Christ's kindness and outlook!
7099. Help penitents realize how needed they are in the church! Young or old, sinner or saint, we are so needed for the church. God in His mercy wants us all!
7100. Respond with understanding and provide helpful suggestions.
7101. Never, ever, ever let me doubt that my absolution was valid! Please!!! Pardon and peace do not flow from priests who play fast and loose with the full and complete prayer of absolution found in the Rite of Penance and in the Catechism. Thank you.

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7102. Be honest and non dogmatic. Treat each person as if he or she were on the edge of leaving the church and direct them.
7103. Maybe consider asking exploratory questions to allow the person to open up and examine their thoughts about the sin or struggle they are there to discuss. Think of it as walking alongside of rather than instructing. Consider what you might say to a good friend or sibling and use that loving approach with a penitent.
7104. I would like to see the return of penance services alongside opportunities for personal confession.
7105. It would be nice, if priests were able to point us to more resources, books, readings, prayers.
7106. Just be kind.
7107. When giving spiritual advice, be succinct. Except in rare circumstances, there is no need to spend five minutes listening to the priest in confession.
7108. Explore confession times outside of a half hour on Saturday afternoon. Make sure it's widely known when Confession is offered.
7109. Make the experience comfortable and personal for the penitent. Listen. Prescribe meaningful penances. Give advice that is grounded in lived experience or don't give advice at all.
7110. Be unabashedly gracious, with your words and countenance.
7111. Really listen and ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything he can say that might help me grow spiritually. Please make sure you say the prayers right, since the absolution is the most important part. Treat those words with the same fidelity as you treat the words of consecration.
7112. Be welcoming. Put the person at ease. Make appropriate small talk. Ask the person if they have any questions. Have a copy of the act of contrition so there's no memorization pressure. Or encourage the person to pray his or her own act of contrition, if they're comfortable.
7113. Listen. Truly listen. Then engage in some amount of dialogue about my confession, like questions inviting the contemplation of my sins, perhaps for after I leave the confessional. When the structure is my confession followed by the doling out of penance, it feels like something I could have received from a vending machine. Not personal at all. Encountering God is so very, very personal.
7114. Never forget that it's as much about absolving our failures as it is about building up the Church in grace. Mercy and justice are cooperative.
7115. Recognize how difficult the process is for the person confessing. I hate the fact that I sin. I understand what it does to my relationship with God. I don't need anyone to make me feel worse than I already do. Confession is a serious matter. I get that. But the fact that someone is there to receive Christ's mercy and forgiveness is something that should be embraced and welcomed.
7116. The priest represents Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We sinners are coming to confession to talk to Christ and to listen to His guidance through the priest. Let the person who has come to you know that you want to be there, that you care that he or she is there, and that you want to bring Christ's message of love to them.
7117. Forget the formulaic penances.
7118. Listen and ask questions to go deeper into the person's struggles.
7119. Show a lot of love and compassion, representing God's.

7120. Remind us at the end that while we may slip we're not a bad person but someone striving to do good and that goodness will be on our side.
7121. Most penitents are frightened or scared. Encourage them to confess and trust in God's mercy. Give a nugget of advice if there is time. Thank you and God bless your work!
7122. Listen beyond the words being said. Listen to the tone and try to hear with your heart the pain, guilt and shame many of us experience when through omission or commission we have injured God or others. We are reaching out.
7123. Be as positive as possible. We need our priests to point us to the direction that Christ wants us to go in.
7124. Be careful with your words. People are vulnerable with you. You are there for Mercy, not judgment.
7125. Always focus on absolution.
7126. Look in my eyes when you grant absolution and smile at me when done. Thank you for asking.
7127. Remind me that the Lord is eager to spend this time with me and to meet me where I am.
7128. Reflect on the fact that you are just as flawed and susceptible to sin as anyone in the laity. Don't look at hearing confession as just a mundane task with a formula, but rather as a beautiful and important ability God grants you as the priestly face of God's mercy in action.
7129. Remind us of what a sin truly is and give examples of how to live virtue. Thank you so much!
7130. Please listen attentively. Try to be a healer and not a guilt-giver. Give meaningful penances, not the usual Hail Marys and Our Fathers.
7131. Understand that life is not black and white, and while the Catholic Church may have strict interpretations of some teachings, persons cannot be judged so simply. View all people as worthy of God's love.
7132. No two confessions are ever the same, even if you've heard it all before. Treat the person with as much compassion as possible. It may not be unique or challenging for you, but it could be for them.
7133. Keep emphasizing that Jesus has flung wide the gates of paradise and is reaching out to poor sinners begging them to come home. Keep saying that Jesus is reaching out His hand and all we have to do is grab it, even if we have fallen badly. And please say the words of absolution properly. Don't substitute words or make it 'your own'. They are literally written down. Just say them.
7134. Listen, encounter, encourage.
7135. Recall that the average lay person is approaching this with guilt and shame because of our sins. Shaming us further will only drive us away. Instead, take the approach that God wants us there regardless of our transgressions because this is how we renew our relationship with him. And then take the time to coach and mentor us.
7136. Approach the sacrament like a form of spiritual direction, accompanying the person in a journey to wholeness and holiness.
7137. I understand that time is so limited. Asking a question or two relating to the problems the person faces, however, might make the confession more personal and meaningful, which might help him or her desire the sacrament more often as well as seek a deeper connection to the Lord.

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- 7138. Promote reconciliation as a healing, transformative experience.
- 7139. The formal process scares people away. Some are so scared of messing up and being judged that they don't go. Please make it personal.
- 7140. Take time to respond in a compassionate way. Don't just hurry through the process.
- 7141. We need more priests who can be compassionate to people who have experienced trauma, who are willing to provide accompaniment on the journey and deliver the most hopeful and helpful ministry.
- 7142. The key is empathy, to realize that it's so much easier these days for the penitent not to put themselves through this and to try to remedy that anxiety before and as they walk in the room.
- 7143. Look always for where God is operating in the person's life.
- 7144. Emphasize the importance of hope and healing.
- 7145. Please don't be mean to people, especially children, if they don't know exactly what to say.
- 7146. As an educator of a teenager who sometimes do stupid things, I've learned never to react strongly to anything negative that he says or does. Never react poorly or sound shocked or disappointed when you hear something shocking or disappointing. He already feels overwhelmingly guilty and broken otherwise he would not be in front of you.
- 7147. Focus on the process of conversion, that we are all sinners and we have a place in the church. Confession is a tool in our every day search for God, not something meant to be painful or make us feel worse about ourselves. I have a huge love for confession that came to me from working everyday with priests and I wish that more people understood that priests do their work out of love for God and us, and that it shouldn't be a scary process to walk with someone on that journey!
- 7148. Speak with love! But don't downplay the seriousness of sin and the need to amend our lives.
- 7149. Listen, Listen, Listen. Be empathetic and please admit that you don't know everything. Treat us, especially women, with respect.
- 7150. Give good catechesis outside of the sacrament, so everyone knows what to expect. Be gentle inside the confessional, listening without rushing the person, with advice or comments tailored to the penitent.
- 7151. Make confession more accessible. The barrier to entry, rather than the sacrament itself, is what needs improving.
- 7152. Be kind and understanding and don't yell at the person.
- 7153. Stop talking and really listen! Don't give solutions; absolution is enough. Compassion not judgment!
- 7154. Empathy.
- 7155. Don't shame. Don't lecture. Don't too lightly dismiss either.
- 7156. Be welcoming. Listen. Don't judge.
- 7157. Be kind and compassionate. Treat people how you'd like to be treated in the confessional.
- 7158. Always say, "Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven. God loves you." Please know that I pray for the priest sincerely when I say my penance.

7159. Always be open to whoever is coming to you. Reassure them that though they may have left God, he has never left them. That His love and mercy is eternal and unconditional
7160. Talk to each other about your experiences and approach. Growth comes from openness.
7161. Search deeply for the underlying hurts that prompt a person to sin. Sin is often a poorly chosen response to a longstanding hurt, an unfilled "God-hole."
7162. Truly listen and truly forgive, with the tone to match.
7163. Use a gentle, calm voice. Ask questions that help the penitent think deeply of why they do what they do, a gentle probing. If a child, use simple words, teach, help them understand that sin affects everyone. If teens, the same thing, but on their level. Use humor, when appropriate. It helps with fear and anxiety.
7164. Don't rush. Take your time talking to the penitent. Make sure they don't feel like a burden or like you are just going through the motions.
7165. Stick to the Church's teachings and not your own interpretations or opinions.
7166. Get advice from Youth Directors who to approach teens in the sacrament. I am a theologian with the mandatum and an educator and have met scores of teens driven from the Church by clericalist priests who know nothing about adolescent development and spirituality.
7167. I feel that creating a welcoming community would encourage more active members to come trust them. It is about building relationships.
7168. Listen with your eyes and let the person speak without your checking the waiting line or the clock.
7169. Be authentic and gentle. The best confessors I've encountered are humble. They know who is really offering mercy and allow themselves to be a conduit of grace.
7170. Listing types and numbers of sins doesn't do it for me. I need to work on attitudes and vices, the root of the sin.
7171. I wish that even adult practicing Catholics would occasionally receive refreshers on the process and making good confessions.
7172. In some places people kneel down and then the confessor help them rise, at the end of the confession: it is a nice symbol.
7173. Face-to-face confessions are so much more personal and inviting of a good conversation than being put behind a screen.
7174. The sacramental nature of confession makes it a heightened experience, but one a lot of people are afraid of. Do whatever you can to help them see that you are an intercessor for God and are working for forgiveness in the community, not a personal judge.
7175. Just listen with empathy and compassion for the humanity we both share.
7176. Invite the person with warmth not judgment. Be present, not distracted. Echo Jesus' kindness and empathy.
7177. Listen and don't be judgmental.
7178. Don't condemn or judge people who are trying to improve themselves.
7179. God's mercy is so amazing that I want to feel my confessor is truly listening from the heart. When I go to confession, I want to know that there isn't a timer going off and that my priest will sit there with me and listen for however long it takes.

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7180. Please challenge us to become holier and help us be brought to greater repentance. Please know you can share deeper insights of the faith to help us to understand the teachings and resources of the Church and to help us see ourselves and our actions as God sees them. Although we are supposed to do much of that work before confession, we are not being catechized on how to do so. Even if most people won't follow through on a suggestion, the ones who are open to it will greatly appreciate it.
7181. Please give more short counsel or advice for each sin to help rid the habit of the sin! Please also expand Confession times throughout the week and before Masses on the weekends.
7182. Listen and don't give us a fast food style confession. Give us something to think about and reflect on.
7183. To be a good confessor, a priest needs to be a frequent receiver of the sacrament himself. He also needs to have a quality prayer life and a quality relationship with Jesus. We look for that and it gives us confidence.
7184. Pray for everyone going to confession that they will be able to open their hearts and make a good confession.
7185. Have a system so the person confessing does not feel rushed. Preach about it! Encourage it!
7186. Be men of prayer who frequent adoration so that you can best represent Christ.
7187. Take the time after hearing one's sins to relate to the sinner.
7188. Father, it takes all my courage and God's grace to bring me to confession. Please help me confess my sins, say a true act of contrition and give me clear absolution.
7189. We are terrified of the shame we feel. Things that aren't meant to seem judgmental can be experienced that way. Lead with Mercy.
7190. Really be interested in what each person is saying. Please don't rush the person. Perhaps change the hours to a more convenient time so there does not have to be so much rushing.
7191. We are scared. Even if we know you, we don't want to let you down. We know we have failed; compassion and love go a long way. Teach us to be better. Shepherd us.
7192. Be available in the confessional. The present trend of limited confession times just is not enough and is, frankly, ridiculous. Sacrifice the office for the confessional.
7193. Compassion.
7194. Remember that you are representing God. Be understanding. Try not to let anything you have heard in the confessional influence you about anyone or thing outside of the confessional.
7195. I love when priests lay their hands on your head during absolution. If behind a screen, I love it when they say something personal and don't seem in a hurry.
7196. Show the person that you are actually listening intently, the way Jesus himself would listen. Help your penitent by suggesting prayers, saint intercessors, and helpful ways to avoid the sin they are struggling with. Emphasize that God doesn't tire from forgiving and pouring out His mercy for anyone who comes to Him with a repentant heart.
7197. Listen to the issues brought up. Pick one or two to discuss, and not always the obvious ones. Give practical, holy advice and guidance.
7198. Love the sacrament itself first to then share it with others.

7199. Our capacity to be forgiven is the cornerstone of why Christ gave His life for us and for our salvation.
7200. Be kind, because it is so difficult for some to confess. Be understanding, since life can adversely affect some.
7201. Be willing to speak as God prompts you. Remind us that God loves us in spite of our failures in faith and life.
7202. Beware of what is going on with your community and the people who attend your church. Then it will be easier to walk in their shoes and hear their confessions.
7203. Gentleness and compassion can be tempered with firmness. Virtue is found in the mean, not the extremes. I would like to thank every priest for trying and exhort never to give up.
7204. Understand how scared and ashamed we are. Help put us at ease. Remind us that the Lord is present. Help us through the process and give a good penance. We want that. And when you give absolution, if you can, lay hands on our heads and speak those words slowly so we can feel the grace and understand how powerful Mercy is.
7205. The confessor through his own humanity is able to connect with the penitent, is able to understand at least spiritually the person's struggle and to support him through the healing process, to arrive at the other side by experiencing Christ's presence in the confessional. It's a lot to ask! May the Holy Spirit help you to make Christ be present during this Sacrament.
7206. Have good eye contact and smile when you greet the person. Don't be too serious in your demeanor. Send the person off besides the absolution with a kind word or piece of advice.
7207. Don't be in a hurry to go to the next person. Always give us advice. Some priests only hear the sin and give the absolution.
7208. Give a reading or more complicated penance than just three Our Fathers. Sometimes we really need to be challenged. Know that many people want to go but that times offered are not always conducive. Remind the penitent that everyone is a sinner and that even priests need to go.
7209. I'd thank them for answering the call to the Priesthood and to be as merciful to themselves as they are to us.
7210. Ask the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit for wisdom and courage to speak His words to each person who enters the confessional seeking the sacrament of reconciliation.
7211. I want to know that I am speaking with Jesus. I do not need personal stories or examples from the priest in confession. It is not helpful. It is distracting and can make me feel that you are not listening.
7212. Be visibly caring and be supportive of a way ahead.
7213. Remind me of his mercy over and over again and provide me with good Biblical suggestions to pray with.
7214. Give a penance that is meaningful and not one that is trite.
7215. Thank you for allowing God's grace to work through you.
7216. Assume that people are repentant by their presence in the confessional. Don't ask questions out of curiosity. Respect the right to anonymity of people who go behind the screen.
7217. Be caring and understanding, but don't water down the Church's teachings. Stand up for the truth.

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7218. Be gentle and willing to listen.
7219. Know that Holy Spirit is with you. Live in the moment with us. Do not behave as if confession is boring.
7220. Be compassionate.
7221. Wee come to the confessional, afraid of who or what we are going to encounter. Listen to our pain and reassure us that God's mercy is infinite.
7222. Project mercy to the penitent the way Jesus might.
7223. Look into our eyes. Make God real. Let us know how glad God is to fill our souls with his peace and grace.
7224. Don't just give absolution! Help people to avoid future sin.
7225. Find a way to help people lose the fear of this Sacrament and let them know that the Lord is waiting with unending love and mercy.
7226. Be Christ to the penitent.
7227. Listen and don't be judgmental.
7228. Tell people when they're confessing wrong. It doesn't take 15 minutes to confess. "Name your sin, how many times, be contrite." Then move the line along. Some of us need to get in there before Mass or we aren't receiving Jesus.
7229. You only have a few minutes with a given person. You don't have the time or information necessary to come to any harsh conclusions about the person. For some, tough love is helpful. For others, tough love is harmful.
7230. Teach us about the importance of examination and prayer prior to confession. God will take care of his profound mercy in confession but one must be prepared. This makes it easier for the priest to do his part. Please make the Sacrament more readily available before most Masses. Encourage the Sacrament from the pulpit. Place a priority on the Sacrament even if you must do away with other less significant programs in the parish in which graces do not flow! Thank you for all you do.
7231. Reflect on saints often. They were (typically) flawed people who developed into God's great followers. We can see ourselves in different saints for each of our different failures. As a confessor you can remind us how various saints overcame our same weakness. There are many paths to the gate.
7232. Confession is often difficult for me. Guidance helps me the most.
7233. Speak to me honestly about sin but also explain God's grace and mercy.
7234. Ask for the Holy Spirit's intercession. Be attentive to the person in front of you. Give feedback and appropriate penances that can help the person grow in Christ. I always like a smile after absolution.
7235. Read and put into practice in the confessional St. Paul's words in 1 Cor 13 about the attributes of love.
7236. Please be patient. Some of us get tongue-tied.
7237. Don't judge. Remember they came to you to find God.
7238. Pray to be a good confessor. Follow the life and virtues of St. John Marie Vianney and of course our Lord.
7239. Instead of giving penances like "Say the Our Father," give ones that will actively push us towards virtue. For example, if we confess anger towards a person, tell us to pray for that person; if we confess lack of love for Mary, tell us to pray the Rosary for ten days, etc.
7240. Make sure penitents know how pleased God is that they are there.

7241. Use the Sacrament as an opportunity to form consciences. Penance is a great opportunity to introduce the faithful to devotions that will help them combat sin in the future. Do not be afraid to ask clarifying or challenging questions to understand the root of sin.
7242. I appreciate when a priest is able to help me see another way to look at something, or a different approach, especially with a pattern of sin that is habitual. I also appreciate a meaningful penance, rather than saying one Our Father and three Hail Marys.
7243. Listen. Don't get stuck in a rut where you treat everyone the same. Know your stuff.
7244. Be a lion in the pulpit, a lamb in the confessional. Condemn sin like a cancer, but remove it gently.
7245. The penitent is looking for help and forgiveness. Provide it.
7246. Be Christ to all who come to you. Listen with your heart. Provide Truth and guidance. Be merciful. Encourage prayer and the Sacraments to all who come to be healed.
7247. Thank you for the important service you're providing.
7248. Guide us through the sacrament.
7249. After absolution, personally pray with the penitent.
7250. Remind us that the angels are rejoicing that we, the prodigal, have returned and that it brings joy to our Father.
7251. If you want to reach more people please consider these more flexible confession options. Perhaps consider reconciliation services with several priests and make it more of a service with readings, music, etc.
7252. Your interactions with each penitent might be remembered forever. Pray to let God's love and mercy truly flow through you.
7253. Always speak from the heart of Jesus. Love is what everything should be measured against. You can't emphasize enough God's unending Mercy.
7254. Give more guidance toward repentance.
7255. Come up with penance ideas that are simple, yet out of the usual. Think of ways to help strengthen penitents against future temptations.
7256. Be a good listener and act accordingly with a person who is confessing sins. Do not judge them. Be positive. Emphasize that God loves us no matter what our sins.
7257. Young parents are often really struggling just to get to Mass and "popping in" for confession is not as easy as it sounds with young kids, especially with tricky childcare situations. Your being understanding, kind, and creative is something that a young parent will remember forever. We need practical, simple advice on how to find God and avoid sin in the middle of chaos and noise, diapers, and crying. We want to hear the truth.
7258. Be patient with me.
7259. Be completely honest with the penitent.
7260. Make people comfortable by being welcoming. Treat everyone like it is his or her first confession. Guide penitents and listen. Don't judge!
7261. Don't scold. Don't emphasize how bad a sin might be. Don't humiliate or shame. Don't try to identify the penitent. Presume they've come to confess because they feel guilt, shame, and sorrow. Presume repentance. Help them see the ocean of God's mercy. Encourage. Try a scriptural penance.
7262. Be respectful and relaxed. Treat each person with God's love in their hearts. Love them as Christ loved you.

7263. Let those participating in the sacrament know everything is okay. That was the biggest weight off my shoulders, to know that I'm not some outcast sinner for what I've done. By making me feel heard, understood, and loved, it made me feel closer to God and the church.
7264. To give the sacrament, I'd hope that they would be consistently going, being challenged, and learning from their own confession experience.
7265. Just listen and be kind and remind us that Jesus loves us. Truly. That's all I've wanted.
7266. If I had a group of priests-confessors all in a room and listening to me, I would first thank them for their hard work as priests, and tell them that we need confession so much. Without it we stray far and wide. I would just ask that they not be in a hurry, to make sure they listen carefully to a penitent and not to make excuses for the penitent, but in a gentle manner, provide correction along with encouragement. I always remind myself that I am confessing to Christ in the person of a priest, so don't forget you're not alone in the confessional!
7267. Use specific readings of Sacred Scripture for penances.
7268. Don't show judgment. Talk to me a little to put me at ease. I grew up with a priest that was a tyrant.
7269. Compassion and empathy are gifts that every confessor needs, and patience too! Do not make the penitent feel rushed.
7270. Come to the confessional with compassion, really listen to the person, don't feel the need to over-respond, and offer a penance that is relevant to the sins. I listen to the priest's counsel as though I am listening to the Holy Spirit, so priests should be aware that their words matter a lot.
7271. I would speak of the importance of loving each person coming to them baring their hearts. Help them to bare their hearts. So many are afraid of confession. To be completely present to the penitent, listening is most important, but I have often heard papers rattling or cell phones ding. Tell the penitent that God loves them and is so merciful. Maybe even thank them for coming, encouraging them to return often, especially if it's been a long time for them. Ask the Blessed Mother to join you in the confessional as she is the Mother of Mercy.
7272. Be kind and patient with penitent. It is hard for some to go to Confession. Give a reasonable penance, nothing strange.
7273. Don't rush people and please be willing to listen and guide people so they avoid that same sin. Help them understand why they committed that sin and how to avoid it.
7274. There are no spiritual directors in my parish or in the surrounding parishes. It seem like parish priests don't have time for this anymore. So please be generous in giving spiritual guidance. Be aware of how the penitent wants to be the best he or she can be with the grace of the Sacrament and your guidance.
7275. It must be really difficult to know when someone needs a little "tough love" versus a softer approach. I don't know how you do it, but it seems like an important thing to get right.
7276. Be kind, listen, encourage and be available. Stress grace and mercy inside and outside the confessional.
7277. Three Our Fathers and Three Hail Marys is lazy. Penance should be about the actual sins confessed and not something rote.
7278. I need reassurance that in spite of my sins, I am loved by Jesus Christ.

7279. One of the priests I go to always says welcome when I go in. It always relaxes me and helps me to be more comfortable when I confess my sins.
7280. Relay to parishioners the need to go to confession often.
7281. Emphasize why the Sacrament is important and why we should make regular use of it. Remind the congregation that even priests need the Sacrament.
7282. Use Scripture and prayer for penances. That will help us grow spiritually.
7283. Listen patiently, give advice or correction where needed, and let the penitent know they have made a good Confession.
7284. Please be patient with those of us who haven't been to Confession in a while or who are converts for whom this is all new and embarrassing.
7285. Be merciful.
7286. Communicate God's mercy in a way that acknowledges the gravity of sin, his delight in welcoming me home to him, and the peace and tranquility that will encourage me to remain in his love and want return to confession should I fall again.
7287. Make us feel at ease.
7288. Show passion and belief in the sacrament; otherwise we may not take it seriously. Catholics notice if a priest truly believes. Confession may be the Church's one opportunity to reach a person. Don't waste it. Catholics are searching for a reason to believe. Teach us.
7289. Listen. Acknowledge the penitent's efforts, reassure him or her of God's mercy, if appropriate give concrete advice. Don't make excuses for me. Don't trivialize or seemed bored. Don't preach at me, but talk to me.
7290. Listen to the penitent and truly hear what she is saying.
7291. Don't rush. We know time is short but take time to listen. Ask questions if needed for clarification and remember that most of us are uncomfortable, so do your best to make us understand that, yes, we have sinned but in reconciliation we are given the chance to wipe the slate clean.
7292. Be thoughtful and truthful.
7293. I would say to approach the penitent as the Good Shepherd would approach his sheep. This means that the confessor should get to know the penitent. Of course this is easier if we're dealing with a regular penitent, but even if the person is anonymous, asking questions may make the penitent more comfortable and open. Each one has a unique personality, family history which may include mental illness or disorders, dysfunction, lifestyle, low education, spiritual maturity, and so. When the confessor has this knowledge and relationship with the penitent, he is better able to show God's great love and desire for the penitent to be with Him; that God truly desires the penitent to be in a loving relationship with Him, rather than just correcting the penitent for wrongdoings. With better understanding of the penitent, the confessor can help the penitent to discover the root of his personal sins and how to deal with them, so that his relationship with God can grow more personal each day. I would also advise the confessor to encourage the penitent with Words from Scripture according to the penitent's personal situation that would show God's mercy and finally, if fitting the situation, to not only give the absolution but to lay hands on the penitent and to call on the Holy Spirit to once again renew his gifts in them. The power of God's words and touch can make the experience more profound.

7294. Engage! You are not an absolution vending machine. You are the vehicle of grace for tender souls who need to trust that you hear them as though they were the only confession this year. Assume the penitent wants to grow in holiness and give some ideas of how to do it. Don't assign teeny penances. That's not being tender, it's being lame and mediocre. Assign Scripture, assign holy hours, assign reparation, assign litanies. Get to the heart of things and lead the penitent there.
7295. Treat people as an individual with compassion.
7296. Share how Jesus died for their sins and knows our weakness. Ask all to share God's love and tell them they are being filled with grace to sin no more. Whatever the issue, give a real resource to help them if the problem is serious.
7297. Explain that God is infinite love. Most people believe we can earn God's love by our moral behavior, but this is wrong. God's love is experienced first and moral behavior is an outflowing of our contact with God. Love is the powerful horse; morality is then the cart that it pulls. This message must be preached and lived by the priest.
7298. The amount of grace and prudence a priest needs to help so many different kinds of souls boggles my mind. I trust that God provides it, and I have no idea whether other Catholics experience confession in a similar manner to me or not. I only know what helps me. I have also been noticing that many college students as well as adults in their 20s and 30s seemingly hungering for something more rigorous. They seem eager for the Church to ask more of them.
7299. Talk those of us who don't go often enough through the Sacrament.
7300. Keep a holy hour every day. Stay close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Study the Diary of St. Faustina to learn more about Divine Mercy Himself.
7301. Help us to feel forgiven and not a terrible person.
7302. Please, please offer more confession times if you can. I know priests are already overwhelmed, and I live in an area with lots of options for confession, but having the option to go immediately before every Sunday Mass would be so helpful.
7303. Have communal penance more often. Rituals well done in a communal setting are my preference.
7304. Be evangelizers of the sacrament. Don't tire in proclaiming the good news of this sacrament. Encourage your brother priests to set aside more time for confessions and to preach on the topic. Encourage your ordinaries to zealously promote it. Demonstrate in your daily life the transforming power of God's mercy. Think outside of the box about how to bring that mercy to people. If they will not come, go to them. On a practical note, as Missionaries of Mercy, keep reminding people that you have special faculties and that you exist. I suspect many have forgotten that, or never understood it. Thank you for what you do for the people of God.
7305. Be kind, empathetic, loving and compassionate.
7306. Patiently hear confessions of only venial sins. Some of us do this not out of scrupulously, but because we wish to grow in holiness, and it's so discouraging to be told only to come to confession if we have mortal sins.
7307. Make people feel more at ease and less ashamed.
7308. Feel what the individual is going through to make them sin and give sage, real-life examples of how to avoid doing so in the future, even though sometimes sinning again may seem inevitable.

7309. Assure the penitent that Christ is right there with him in the confessional. This is powerful.
7310. Listen.
7311. Be patient, kind and understanding.
7312. Jesus said those without sin can cast the first stone. All of us are human beings and have made mistakes. Compassion needs to be a huge part of Reconciliation.
7313. I think the confessor needs to be very upbeat about welcoming people back into the fold of our Lord Jesus. I wish that confessions were not limited to 30 minutes or an hour before one Mass on a Saturday. It diminishes the importance of this sacrament. Confessions should be offered before every Mass. Penitents shouldn't feel rushed because the priest has to leave the confessional in order to get ready for Mass.
7314. I feel more comfortable when priests can find something positive in me even though I have a multitude of sins. It makes me feel like there is hope for me yet. Please help the younger generation to understand that God wants them to come and confess their sins and he wants to forgive them.
7315. Imitate Jesus' mercy, forgiveness and hope.
7316. Please do not bring your cell phone into the confessional. It would like having it at the altar. This is a sacrament and it is sacred. The bride is returning to her bridegroom seeking forgiveness and making amends. Having a cell phone in the confessional brings the secular world into this sacred mystery. It also raises the possibility of breaking the seal through recording the confession. Priests haven't had phones in the confessional for thousands of years; we don't need them now. Priests should be praying the rosary, praying the breviary with a book, or saying other devotional prayers without a cell phone.
7317. Speak from the heart.
7318. Offer a refresher course for those people who made their first Confession when they were eight, many years ago. I literally have no clue what I am supposed to do.
7319. Don't judge people. Everyone brings hurts and fears to the confessional. What you say will either put a person at ease or drive them away from the sacrament.
7320. Please let us know you care and don't just go through the motions. Speak from love and from your heart.
7321. Always try to connect to the person in front of you. Do not have a cookie cutter response or penance. I think every confession deserves to be unique.
7322. Really listen to the person, give feedback and make them feel comfortable. You want them to keep coming back.
7323. Listen well and do not come off as judgmental.
7324. Actively listen and perhaps give some examples of others in Church history who may have made the same errors we have. Mentor with such parables.
7325. Don't yell, or belittle anyone. That was so detrimental to my spiritual growth. Instead be a good listener and offer the perspective of the Gospel. Thanks!
7326. Stay true to the words of Jesus. Hold people accountable and offer advice and resources.
7327. Do not have a judging face or tone.
7328. Be not afraid to ask simple questions that get more to the root of the issue. Don't be afraid to offer penitents help in forgiving others.
7329. Let us hear the word of God.

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7330. Don't be in a hurry. Be completely focused.
7331. Tell people they are doing the right thing by being there. Be firm without being judgmental in your advice. Hurry up if there is a line!
7332. Maybe offer enough time for confession throughout the week or month so that you can spend a few more minutes with penitents who need it. Offer some practical ideas or tools to grow in faith while moving away from whatever sins are the issue.
7333. Give spiritual advice! Let the person know that they their sins are a coping mechanism, and that they can be healed by God.
7334. Listen carefully, be considerate and advise gently.
7335. Remember that the confessional is not a pleasant place for most.
7336. Always remind those confessing to forgive themselves as God forgives.
7337. Do not preach. Acknowledge the virtue in being there and that it's hard to do. Let them walk out feeling good about themselves to help them strive to be a better person.
7338. Remember you are not any better than the rest of us and have committed sins like we have.
7339. It's confession, not spiritual direction. If the penitent wants to chat, please have him or her schedule an appointment.
7340. Help us understand the Sacrament as reconciliation rather than as penance.
7341. Forget yourselves and be open to where the Spirit guides you. Listen to the penitent's tone of voice, posture and emotion.
7342. If you want to offer counseling, do that outside of the confessional.
7343. Try to do your hour of adoration and prayer just before hearing confessions, if possible. Regardless, pray for penitents in advance, and for those who should be coming.
7344. Be understanding. Don't judge or chastise. Be patient. Be kind.
7345. Be a good listener and not judgmental.
7346. Confession to me is a place not only to encounter God's mercy in the forgiveness of my sins, but to have my conscience formed and receive help to avoid sin in the future. I feel most loved when I'm listened to, given concise counsel, and encouraged to pursue real sanctity instead of settling for the bare minimum.
7347. Listen and talk to me like an understanding friend.
7348. Please be patient. Kindly guide us through the Sacrament. Even those of us who are 'seasoned' can always learn and grow!
7349. A good confessor needs balance. He can't go easy and wave off simple sins, but he can't bring fire and brimstone either.
7350. Please be patient and please let us use notes or apps if we need them.
7351. Give the best advice you can, keeping in mind there is probably a long line of people who only have a half hour lunch period.
7352. Help us confess more easily. I think some people are put off by going in a confessional. It's dark and scary.
7353. Put less emphasis on form and more emphasis on personal sharing. Emphasize mercy in the penance.
7354. Be kind, understanding and give words of encouragement
7355. Don't try to be a buddy. Be a confessor. Be holy, be merciful and listen.

7356. Become experienced in inner healing and deliverance work, so that penitents can continue to heal. Know of supporting ministries available in the area, so that the sacrament does not stand alone and penitents can progress on their journey.
7357. Talk about confession and the beautiful graces we receive from it from the pulpit. Explain the fundamentals of why the Catholic church has confession and focus on the healing aspects. I tell my friends that it's free and much cheaper than sitting on a psychiatrist's couch, you really feel "lighter" when you come out, you get graces to resist sin, there is accountability knowing you have someone you are going to answer to, and it truly helps you grow in virtue and your spiritual journey.
7358. Use humor. Be nonjudgmental.
7359. Offer guidance, don't judge, be kind.
7360. Make the penitent feel welcome. Let them know you've heard it all. Don't appear bored or superior. Remind the penitent that confession is not a punishment but rather a tool for improving ourselves. Help us to be more Christlike.
7361. Tell us we can truly know our sin is gone when forgiven! Some times reflect on what absolution means in a homily. Thank you for being priests!
7362. You have a powerful role in either being the conduit of God's mercy or in destroying people's self confidence and will to do better. First do no harm!
7363. Be prayerful and let Jesus do the talking.
7364. Going to confession always makes me very nervous. I appreciate it when the confessor approaches it more like a "what's on your mind" rather than "what did you do." More like a chat than an inquisition. A smile goes a long way. I also sometimes need to be reminded that God really does love me.
7365. Provide a catechesis on the sacrament of penance to your parishioners on occasion to help those who feel they need refresher. This is such an important sacrament that we need to feel comfortable in going to confession by knowing better how.
7366. Listen with your heart and don't judge people.
7367. Foster the Sacrament as a true place of victory. It would help us participate more frequently.
7368. The three elements that help me experience God's mercy in confession are being reminded of God's endless love and encouraged to trust in His grace; being encouraged and strengthened in the fight against sin; and hearing the words of absolution clearly spoken without haste.
7369. Always listen well and give good counsel to those who come.
7370. There is a need for an easier method to regularly receive the Sacrament of Confession. Let us use email or text messages to set up appointment times.
7371. Make Confession available as often as possible. If you offer it, people will come. Put people at ease. Some don't know the basic steps or the act of contrition and need help. Assure people of God's mercy and be relaxed.
7372. Be open and listen.
7373. When starting confession, start with meaningful prayer, give the penitent your full attention. Really listen. Give advice that is helpful and a penance that is meaningful, not just Hail Marys and Our Fathers.
7374. Preach more during Sunday mass on Divine Mercy, which will encourage more people to go to Confession.
7375. Talk but don't preach.

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7376. Remember how guilty the person on the other side of the screen feels.
7377. The Confessor should fully realize that when his own eternal judgment will depend upon how often and how well he has bestowed God's Mercy upon his people.
7378. Listen intently. Give a penance that is meaningful. Be the kind of priest that people can trust. Live in such a way that they will never feel that the confidentiality of confession will be breached.
7379. Keep the process as simple as possible, so as to make it easier to go to confession again when needed. Also, give out pamphlets to simplify and help us to understand what sins are truly necessary for confession versus small things that we can acknowledge ourselves in prayer to God.
7380. Accept more of what I'm actually going through and how hard it is to change some habits, even though I'm doing my best.
7381. Distinguish what is advice from what is my penance. Sometimes I leave and am a bit confused about what my penance is. Keep penance specific. Also please make sure there are clear directions outside of the confessional to instruct people where to wait, where the line starts and ends, how far away from the confessional they should be. It seems kind of silly but there can be a lot of confusion especially for someone who is new to the church or sacrament. Also, we should offer confession in more public places. The pandemic showed us how creative we can be. Thank you!
7382. Please eliminate the long Act of Contrition and replace with "Jesus have mercy on me, a sinner."
7383. Listen. Support. Ask questions when appropriate. Don't judge. Show empathy.
7384. You are a man, not God. The evil one will be trying to influence your thinking and judgment. Pride is the deadliest of sins. Pray and remain faithful to the Bible, the Catechism, and the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. You are not the juror and judge. Pray to God to work through you and guide your tongue.
7385. Just listen and forgive.
7386. Please be there. We need you. Perhaps consider more penance services.
7387. God is with you in the confessional!
7388. Understand that humbling oneself to speak of my faults is difficult and that the confessor is in the most powerful position to effect change.
7389. Remain calm. No judging.
7390. Compassion.
7391. Take time with each penitent. Ask questions. Challenge us. Gift the gift of your time. Offer hours of confession per week, not just 30 min. Act like you want to be there. This is the same challenge every parent faces when their children require more than they think they can give.
7392. Truly listen and guide.
7393. Remind us that Jesus forgave his traitors, which is how he forgives us.
7394. It is important that the penitent knows that the priest indeed is interested and has time for them. It is relational, missionary, and an act of accompaniment. If we truly want the sacrament to come back into practice for the majority of Catholics, we must grasp that the vast majority of adult Catholics do not understand the beauty, purpose or priority of it for their lives. God's endless mercy and the conversion of sinners is powerful stuff!
7395. Walk with me, understand my sins and give me guidance to never do it again.

7396. Be someone who has compassion and find ways or suggestions to help us not make the same mistakes. Have discussions, not reprimands.
7397. Our penances should involve a whole lot more of "being God's hands and feet." Prayers are good. Doing good in the world for penance brings good to something negative.
7398. Be human and caring.
7399. Do what you can to help us see how happy God is that we are there, encourage us to confess regularly, speak truth in love, and ask us to pray for you!
7400. Use the Scriptures and saints to guide me. Remind me that love for the Sacrament of Confession is a grace.
7401. Help me remember that God loves me through all my faults.
7402. Listen closely, comment less, openly love the penitent and wish him or her peace. And please use Sacred Scripture.
7403. Asking questions of those in Confession and then talking for a couple minutes about the sins being confessed, rather than simply listening, is something that could be done a more. Give a brief pep talk and then assign the penance.
7404. Provide an examination of conscience sheet to help penitents better prepare for a good confession. Perhaps post it on the church website and in your weekly bulletin, advise parishioners where on your website it can be found. Offer face-to-face as well as time to hear confession in a confessional booth for those who prefer that option.
7405. Put the person at ease, encourage the penitent not to worry about the words, welcome warmly, listen, reassure.
7406. Talk about the virtues that counter the sins people we confess. Don't brush off sins as if they're no big deal. Some of the worst confessions I had were with priests who told me to "do what I have to do" when it comes to birth control when I confessed my husband and I were struggling with not wanting to get pregnant again.
7407. Don't chastise or punish. Be kind, understanding and instructive, and forgiving.
7408. Listen and speak slowly.
7409. If someone texts you or calls and asks for the Sacrament of Confession, when possible, invite them to come right then or whenever is best for them. It typically means someone is hurting badly. If you tell them, "Next Tuesday at 3:30," it's like saying that they can't come to Jesus right then.
7410. Always be kind and compassionate. Offer encouragement
7411. Penitents are vulnerable. Be merciful and understanding. Each sacramental opportunity may be a way to bring someone back into the Church. Let God work through you to help bring his son or daughter back.
7412. Offer comforting words.
7413. Stick with the prescribed words of absolution and do not make up your own. Help the person, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to identify the root of the sin and give counsel on dealing with it. Do not be afraid to call out a sin. Finally, don't rush me but encourage me to get to the point and suggest we make an appointment for later to discuss spiritual matters.
7414. Listen to your penitent and hear what he is telling you is troubling him. Help him with specific ways to avoid those near occasions of sin and to struggle with his habitual sins. Encourage him to seek God in those moments.

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7415. Be less formal. We are all looking for human interaction and a kind word is more helpful than sitting silent.
7416. Put yourself in the place of the person confessing their sins.
7417. Do not hurry people. More time than 30-45 minutes. Please don't criticize: people are nervous enough.
7418. Remember your life before you became a priest. Think about your experiences going to confession and what was it that made it good for you.
7419. Listen to what is being shared with you. Parrot it back to the person confessing. It's an old sales technique, but it proves that the penitent has been heard. "Have you given any thought about why you do X?" It's a great discussion starter.
7420. I think the one thing that keeps me from confession sometimes is I can't name sins. I have some general areas I constantly need to work on, but I worry I am not scrutinizing myself enough and am missing sins. I worry I am sinning by going to confession and not saying everything I need to. It is exhausting to think about for me.
7421. People who go to confession are looking for guidance to become better Christians. It's not just about absolution.
7422. I come to confess because I have sinned, but I love my Savior and want to be better. Guide me.
7423. Be patient and kind, listen and give spiritual direction without making us feel worse than we are already feeling.
7424. Be understanding.
7425. Learn to listen, to be more compassionate and nonjudgmental.
7426. Make the person feel more at ease.
7427. Listen and speak with kindness.
7428. It would be helpful to be reminded of the types of sins to confess because while I'm sure I have many, they maybe are not as detailed or comprehensive as it should be. Confession isn't easy but always feels so worth it after going. Thank you. We appreciate you!
7429. Walk us through the process and remind us of the love and mercy of our loving God.
7430. Be open and relatable with regard to life's problems and transgressions. Keep yourself educated on current events and situations that may come your way. Stay at peace with yourself and the faith.
7431. Make penance something more unique than three Hail Marys. Have us do something directly related to our sin, to right the wrong. It helps us feel like the score is even and we are now able to accept God's mercy more fully.
7432. Listen very carefully.
7433. Allow the person to make her confession and try to have her feel forgiven and loved by God.
7434. Make the penitent feel comfortable.
7435. The Ritual calls for the sacrament to begin with Scripture, but no one ever does it. You should. That'd be great.
7436. Remind us that God loves us and is available to us in our life struggles. Commit to prayer. And tell us that we are called to share our faith.
7437. Be as welcoming as possible to those that haven't been to confession in a while. Please don't be harsh.

7438. Be kind, and helpful, especially when someone seems unsure or hasn't been to confessions in a while.
7439. Be a "lion in the pulpit, a lamb in the confessional."
7440. Take time to listen and offer spiritual advice, which helps me know you really care about me—even if you doesn't know me personally.
7441. People are afraid of confession. Make it more inviting and less frightening. Many people have gone years without the Sacrament. How can you bring it to them? Can it be incorporated right before or after Mass each week so that it's easier to go?
7442. Provide real life solutions.
7443. Be firm, knowledgeable and understanding. Show me how to avoid repeating the same sins.
7444. Depend on the Holy Spirit to speak through you, rather than coming up with your own words. Be as gentle as Christ was with repentant sinners.
7445. Be holy!
7446. Don't just be happy I came. Help me see how offensive my deeds are to God.
7447. Explain more about the basis of God's mercy. Why does He love me even though I sin as I do? How can I work on overcoming my "regular" sins so as to be closer to God? I wish more priests would help me understand the concept of God's love and mercy for a sinner like me.
7448. Keep it short, be kind, challenge me.
7449. Don't be in a hurry. Get the background to understand what the true sin is.
7450. Explain why the sacrament of reconciliation is so beautiful, life changing and amazing. I used to hate confession and avoiding going, figuring I could just confess to God, but then I had an amazing confession where I really felt like Christ was speaking directly to me, the priest not only gave me a wonderful scripture meditation for my penance, but was so incredibly compassionate and a good listener. I was so broken, vulnerable and could have easily not gone to confession or been as candid with him as I was, but it was so healing. Good experiences bring people back. Bad experiences will keep people away for a long time, not just from confession but even from the Church.
7451. Be in the state of grace and speak the mind of God.
7452. Put confessionals back in prominent place in the churches. Talk about how Confession and the Eucharist go hand in hand. Talk about the grace received and how it keeps us from falling. Talk about how you yourselves go to confession and about God's love and mercy. Talk about the institution of the Sacrament. Talk about how often I should go. Use handouts for the steps and examination of conscience or suggest apps to use. Thanks for asking!
7453. Please be welcoming and loving with the penitents. Be open to the Holy Spirit. Listen well and be generous with time. Offer words of encouragement. Thank you for celebrating the Sacrament with us and pronouncing the words of absolution so we can know and hear that we are forgiven of our sins. Thank you for being a priest!
7454. Remind the penitent of God's love, maybe through a scripture reference, and give them suggestions for how to stay on the right path.
7455. Pause and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance as to what that penitent needs right then, what guidance does he need to hear, in some cases reminding him that although in absolution God forgives them and purifies their soul, they need to forgive themselves and move on to where God needs them to be.

7456. Encourage! The best confessions I have had were ones where the priest was positive and uplifting!
7457. Be kind and patient and never have a look of disgust on your face.
7458. Listen to what the penitent is saying and don't jump to assumptions.
7459. I have a skewed view of God as being harsh, so I appreciate anything a priest can say or do in confession to help me understand that God loves me and is merciful. Please don't scold or harp on form. Some priests don't give any counsel. Please give at least a short word of counsel since many of us don't get any other spiritual direction.
7460. Be merciful.
7461. Speak Truth. Call sin what it is. We need good, holy priests who believe the teachings of the Church and who challenge and encourage us to holiness. Give us hope.
7462. I would liked to be asked questions about what leads me to a particular sin that could shed light on the habits to avoid the specific sin. Go beyond the generalized, "People do this because...."
7463. People come to confession to lift burdens, and some come more frequently than others. Confession is not just for those who haven't been in years. The Church encourages people people to go regularly. I've had a priest ask me why am I coming to confession when I went a week ago. If frequent confession was good for St. Padre Pio and St. Pope John Paul II, why isn't it good enough for me?
7464. Please do what you can to add more confession times.
7465. When I am in the Confessional, I am at my lowest and feel very far removed from the Lord. You have the unique ability not only to bring me out of the darkness and lead me into the light, but also to demonstrate God's mercy and love in such a way that His forgiveness will become my source of strength to move forward without fear or shame. Please do not hold back on showing human emotion on your part! Jesus was human! He had emotions like we all do! So, when you are in persona Christi, allow yourselves to connect with me on a personal level. It is much easier to hear and feel the words of Christ when you sound like Christ.
7466. Be kind, listen and be truthful with the person who is confessing. Lead her on the right track to help her overcome her sin.
7467. Ask follow up questions. Give some advice.
7468. Preach about the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly. We need reminders of the grace and power of this Sacrament. Be present for us as much as possible. Churches that offer Confession prior to Mass have been a great blessing to me and my family. The traditional "30 minutes on Saturday afternoon" shows little consideration for the modern schedule. Finally, remind us to pray for you.
7469. Be pleasant and make whoever's making his or her confession as comfortable as possible
7470. Listen to what is said and not said. Be welcoming.
7471. Help us to avoid future sin without turning confession into counseling
7472. Pray more together after confessing to provide a feeling of safety in numbers.
7473. Be relatable. Don't give nebulous advice. Be concrete.
7474. Please try to offer the sacrament for more often.
7475. Read some of what was written just before and after Vatican II, like Orsy's *The Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Emerging Church* and Haring's *Shalom*. They describe the Church's desire to take the experience of the Sacrament out of the

perfunctory and juridical. The priest is in the place of Christ. I suspect Christ would be open to however the penitent comes and take whatever time and approach are needed.

7476. Remind those confessing that God is merciful, that we just need to keep trying and trusting in God's mercy.
7477. Be patient, be a good listener, and be brief.
7478. Always remind us that we are loved by Our Lord, and that we need to work everyday to be in Our Lord's grace and repent from the heart. Help us to learn from the Blessed Virgin Mary.
7479. Maybe refer to Scripture passages that are appropriate for the sin.
7480. Remind us that God loves us regardless of our poor human failings, and encourage us to try to receive the sacrament as often as we can.
7481. Don't treat confession like an assembly line. Take the time to think about what the person is saying to you.
7482. Make it easy to open up our soul to you in confession. Discuss our sins and temptations and offer help in the struggle against temptation.
7483. Show your joy in God's mercy while not making light of sin. Give good advice that is loving but doesn't conform to the world. Challenge us to be saints. Be available and encourage people to go to the font of God's mercy and not to despair.
7484. Please mention specifically God's mercy! It would be awesome actually to see the priest move his hand in absolution. Can something other than three Hail Marys be given for a penance?
7485. Most men in their 20s and 30s are addicted to pornography and I've never heard a homily on the topic. Please preach on it. There are likely many men committing such mortal sins that you aren't hearing confessed, perhaps because they don't know the seriousness of what they're doing.
7486. It is helpful if the confessor allows me to speak, rather than preach, or seem disinterested.
7487. Keep it sacramental and prayerful. Some priests go too far in trying to make the Sacrament feel too comfortable, almost like a therapy session. While there are definitely therapeutic aspects of confession, nothing is more distracting to me when I feel like I'm speaking with someone else rather than God.
7488. Explain how the penance will help repair a sinful act. Encourage us from the beginning to open and say the sins that we have. Recommend where to begin. Give the penitent some time or even offer to help guide them through the examination of conscience so that confession is thorough. Say things with a lot of love. Encourage prayer and the Holy Rosary against future temptations and give other practices that can help.
7489. Please don't "preach" when we need to be consoled. God still loves us and you are there to forgive us in His name. Penance could be something more related to the situation. The "usual" prayers are fine but maybe include something such as "this week you really should try to....."
7490. One confessor I go to is very good about concentrating on changing one behavior at a time to help move toward success.
7491. Never berate or scold or make someone afraid to return. Jesus would not do that.
7492. Provide encouragement and concrete advice.

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7493. Please don't be flippant or act like you don't want to be there. Make sure your people know that hearing Confessions is of great importance to you. Be available for it. Say the whole formula of absolution slowly and clearly. Offer sound advice.
7494. Be sincere. Do not lessen the gravity of what we confess. Do not beat us up about it but tie it to God's endless Mercy. Help us to walk out of the confessional ready to battle evil again.
7495. You cannot have mercy without justice. Give a good penance that can be accomplished, not abstract ideals that would take a lifetime to complete.
7496. Listen and try to understand. Offer advice.
7497. Truly listen to what is being said with words but also listen with your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Be encouraging and guiding. Teach your penitents what mercy is. Give them spiritual reading.
7498. Acknowledge my sins as sins.
7499. Feel free to tell me things I may not want to hear but need to hear.
7500. I doubt anything could make the moment of absolution more profound.
7501. Pray the whole absolution prayer, slowly. So many priests rush through it or abridge it.
7502. Be short and to the point please. Unless is at a retreat setting where spiritual direction is expected, it is really hard to wait in line for an hour and then be turned away due to time. Also, please try to hear confessions more frequently.
7503. Don't be easy. Be honest.
7504. Approach it as Christ would, with love and not looking to get rid of me. More time should be allocated to hearing confessions.
7505. I know confession may not be the place for it, but many people are looking for spiritual direction.
7506. Always have a written protocol in the confessional or reconciliation room to help with nerves.
7507. Remember that you are "in persona Christi." Act as Jesus the good shepherd for each person.
7508. Number one: be available physically and spiritually. You cannot give what you don't have: utilize confession in your own life, pray consistently, work out your salvation in fear and trembling. If you do this, it will show in you as a Confessor.
7509. People are coming to the Sacrament seeking God's mercy and love. They are not looking to be "yelled at." Sadly, there is a generation of priests who reprimanded penitents for committing sins. Many people have been scarred by that experience and have stopped going to confession.
7510. Don't rush. I know at my parish we always have a line and the priest will not be able to hear everyone's confession. But I no sooner walk into the confessional that I feel rushed to fall on my knees and get started.
7511. Help penitents avoid sin with concrete practical advice.
7512. Be holy men.
7513. Give some loving spiritual guidance to us on our journey.
7514. Keep to tradition. Be exacting with kindness. Explain and give a real penance. And invite the penitent back!
7515. Use the proper words of absolution!

7516. Consider the whole person when they approach for confession, like what might be leading someone to a certain sin. Don't be afraid to ask questions and provide feedback and insight when time allows. Practical steps last a long time. Tie everything back to our identity as God's beloved.
7517. Don't think God has magically bestowed you with the power to stop people from sinning again by scoldings or lectures. Every priest is not Padre Pio. Please be mindful of people coming in with severe anxiety, social phobia, scruples, depression, panic disorder, and so on. Please be gentle and non-invasive.
7518. Always have hope and faith.
7519. What has always stayed with me, especially as I have aged, is when a priest matches my penance to the sins I have confessed. For example, if I confess not having patience with my children, the priest has asked that I take the time to sit quietly with my kids and read a book or play a game.
7520. Don't judge others for their sins, as we have all sinned.
7521. Thank you for saying yes to your vocation. If I can give any advice I would suggest giving penances with substance. Not just one or two simple prayers. My most recent one was to read Psalm 51. That has been the best.
7522. Be welcoming. Give me time to explain the situation.
7523. Ask if there is anything else the penitent would like to bring up.
7524. Be Jesus to everyone who comes to you. Be firm but loving in your response. Do not water down the sacrament and what it means. Give people the truth and guide them away from their sin.
7525. Post the Act of Contrition and exactly what to say in large print in the confessional. Preach about sacrament a lot.
7526. Don't pretend to know everything. Be yourself. Love the penitent. Feed your mind and soul so you can feed the penitents.
7527. Always have an outpouring of love for the penitent and love them like Jesus did. Don't rush us but encourage us to build our confessions like a "brick wall," with no excuses or explanations. Lay the sins out.
7528. The people of God needs help. Some confessors don't give any advice.
7529. I appreciate when the priest listens and offers the Lord's consolation, making sure that it is understood that he is acting on God's behalf and not offering human forgiveness. Whenever possible, speaking from the Word and encourage more time with Sacred Scripture. There is so much consolation to be found in His Word.
7530. Be kind and honest. Don't be too easy on people afraid they won't come back. Challenge the person while meeting them where they are.
7531. Be compassionate to the sinner. Don't be afraid to give your wisdom as God directs you.
7532. Don't think that reading souls is reserved for one in a million. Do what it takes to put your ministry in the situation where you can have a conversation with the Holy Spirit and receive answers for those in confession.
7533. Tell penitents to come back regularly. We are sinners and need to present ourselves worthily for the Eucharist.
7534. Pray to the Holy Spirit for the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, mercy, love and patience. Greet the penitent's guardian angel as the penitent enters the confessional.

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7535. ThankYOU for this opportunity to share.
7536. Recognize that for every individual that confesses, it could be a very profound experience, no matter the severity of the sins confessed. We need some kind of acknowledgment of that. This might be helped through a penance that relates to the sin. I would rather be told say a Hail Mary for my children (if my confessed sin related to them) than just to say a Hail Mary.
7537. Listen. Clarify what you heard. Express your understanding of what was shared. Make the Penance appropriate to the person's situation.
7538. Please approach this as the great sacrament that it is, not a Saturday morning box to tick on the schedule. I come first and foremost for the absolution and reparation, but also for the grace of this sacrament and the guidance of the shepherd.
7539. Don't be afraid to address the root of our sins, especially for those who confess pornography. Be prepared and equipped with resources for us rather than just saying, "Keep trying!"
7540. Talk more about the Sacrament on Sunday.
7541. Model for the faithful how the Sacrament should be part of every Catholic's regular life.
7542. Remember you are an instrument of God, not God himself.
7543. Be gentle in word and thought.
7544. Be kind. Especially with the very young. You will influence people for life, good and bad.
7545. Encourage adults to return to confession. Find a way to make it less stressful for them to return.
7546. Listen and please be vested. It shows that we're doing something sacred.
7547. Show compassion and understanding as Jesus does.
7548. Remember how difficult it is to tell someone what you have done wrong, to admit your faults and mistakes. So be kind, loving and supportive, as Christ would be.
7549. I would advise giving direction, insight and comfort in response to a person's specific sins, not a scripted response.
7550. Really speak to the penitent.
7551. Regardless of how busy you, speak to the person, let the penitent know he is seen and heard. Engage in personal conversation. When the penitent feels he is being guided, listened to and not rushed, he will be more open to receive grace from Jesus. If the experience is robotic, fast and the penitent is almost pushed out, it can detract from the Sacrament's impact. This is most important at these penance services. The words is missing this personal encounter with Christ. God bless you all.
7552. Be welcoming, listen well, be personal, be open to the Holy Spirit flowing through your presenceyou're your words. Be aware of how grateful and blessed we are to have the sacrament!
7553. Sometimes I like the priest not to look at me when I'm telling something I'm really ashamed of. I want them to tell me it's ok and that I can be a good person even if I did a bad thing. I want them to seem like they care about me, to touch me somehow, even if just on the head or hand.
7554. Be understanding and compassionate.
7555. Be encouraging.

7556. Help me feel that I do not have to hurry. Provide more than a cookie-cutter penance, like "Say 3 Hail Marys."
7557. Listen carefully. Keep responses brief and to the point.
7558. Be the Word.
7559. Offer confession more, encourage it more in homilies and be patient. If you offer it, they will come.
7560. People attending confession are already sorry and looking to improve their relationship with God and deepen their faith. Sometimes it just feels like more of a transaction.
7561. Don't rush and please speak clearly.
7562. You are Christ's servants on earth. Listen with mercy and truly be present. The sacrament is so important!
7563. Remember how important you are in serving God by guiding your people to greater closeness with him. You are helping us to change our lives for the better.
7564. Remember that you are least important in the sacrament. God and the sinner are the focus. You mediate the conversation.
7565. As a penitent I am not only trying to come to Jesus with my sins to be forgiven but I am looking for serious direction.
7566. Please look me in the eye, understand what I am saying, and do not judge me.
7567. Give us the benefit of doubt.
7568. If you are in "rush," let the people know and apologize.
7569. Give time to the penitent and prayerfully hear the confession.
7570. Ask or teach the people to pray for you before and after the confession. It makes a difference.
7571. Ask open-ended questions. Explain what Christ's teachings are. Remind us that we are all sinners but our Lord wants to reconcile with us, have us experience his mercy, and love us.
7572. I appreciate it when the priest says something like, "You have made a good Confession," or if they ask for more details if what I have said isn't clear. It shows me that what I am saying is important and helps me to prepare myself better for the Sacrament. Also, the priest's tone of voice makes a big difference. If the priest sounds like he's bored, it's easy to imagine God isn't interested in my sins. But if the priest speaks with conviction, it helps me to know that God loves me and forgives me.
7573. Don't be afraid to give spiritual direction. Tell penitents to call the rectory to make an appointment to see you if they need more than a few minutes of spiritual advice.
7574. When I am in doubt about a particular sin's level of seriousness, i.e. venial or mortal, let me know clearly. Confessors are human also and communications skills vary. However to the best of your ability, try to give us direct advice useful to increasing our confidence to avoid the sin in the future. Take the time needed with each person.
7575. Take time to ask questions to clarify what I am confessing. Recommend steps that I can take that will draw me closer to Christ and away from sin.
7576. I am not there for the full homily. There may be a line of people behind me. Be sensitive to my spiritual needs, but also aware of the time.
7577. Don't rush. Don't take shortcuts with the Rite. Be affirming. Be joyful about a repentant sinner. Don't minimize what a person determines is a sin.

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7578. Listen. Be kind. Ask more questions. Don't rush people. Catholics need more education about what sin is and what and how we should be confessing. Encourage people to go face-to-face.
7579. Check your pride and remember that it is Jesus we seek. We encounter Jesus through you, but if we know that you are truly letting Jesus speak through you, perhaps fewer people would take offence at things that are said. I cry for the souls who have stopped going to confession due to having taken offense at comments from priests.
7580. Recall you were chosen to act in the place of Jesus.
7581. Go deeper into the Spirit's action in this sacrament. What can you say that will bring the penitent into greater awareness of God's profound love and yearning for him or her?
7582. Speak personally and compassionately. Give creative penances such as short and appropriate scripture passages to meditate on, or spiritual reading.
7583. Mercy over discipline. Love over judgment.
7584. Have the tender heart and mind of Christ.
7585. Walk the walk. We need holy men. Please do not schedule everything for your convenience but for our mutual convenience.
7586. I am very thankful for your beautiful ministry to be God's mercy in our lives. Thank you. May you be greatly blessed!
7587. I know you are pressured to hear as many confessions as possible and it is good to not have people standing in long lines. Find that delicate balance between moving the long winded along and not letting the people feel rushed.
7588. Catholic churches should offer more days and times for reconciliation. If they offer more days and times, there will be more people at confession.
7589. Remember to bring Jesus' mercy into the confessional.
7590. Please let those in confession know that no matter what, the Lord loves them deeply and wants them to heal. Be good listeners, be compassionate and thoughtful. Offer suggestions about a better path if one seems stuck. And be gentle.
7591. Show God's mercy. Be humble. Really listen to the person confessing.
7592. Pray to our Lord for the ability to see the real person before you. Ask for help in knowing how to reach the spirit of the person as Christ would. Show mercy in each aspect of the confession. I am a convert. Confession was the hardest "issue" to wrap my head around while in RCIA.
7593. Be understanding and give forgiveness
7594. Be understanding, forgiving and kind.
7595. Before absolution, think about words that will comfort those who are experiencing bad thoughts and feelings from something bad that happened to them to which they reacted, for example, with anger.
7596. Smile! And speak lovingly.
7597. Explain sin and forgiveness. There is a lot of gray area and not everyone thinks the same thing so consistency between priests is important.
7598. Be encouraging and listen fully.
7599. Be caring. Don't rush. Don't say, "Come and see me anytime." I did knock on the door after Mass and he was evasive. Three times.
7600. When giving a penance, please don't give one that takes all lent to complete. The priest said come to the stations on Wednesdays. I was confused as to whether the

absolution would only take effect on Wednesday of Holy Week and whether, if something important came up and I wasn't able to go, whether my sins would remain.

7601. I don't know what the rules are as far as the penances that are given, but I'd rather do a practical penance that addresses what I've confessed, like fast from a meal as a penance for my gluttony, or spend time reading Scripture or visit the Blessed Sacrament as penance for spending too much time on my phone or watching television.
7602. Help me if possible. Give me advice in a way to figure out the root of my sin.
7603. Be present. Help those struggling to find comfort in this beautiful sacrament.
7604. Listen with your wounded heart. Emphasize God's understanding of our human nature and his unconditional love for us
7605. Be gentle listeners who do not hesitate to ask questions about the consequences of my sins as a follower of Christ.
7606. Ask us what we struggle with and then give advice on how to overcome the fault. Always give words of encouragement.
7607. Confession typically a very vulnerable and often fear-filled moment for people. Treat us accordingly so that we meet the mercy and love of the Father and not wrath and judgment. Be totally present to each person. Listen and respond like we matter.
7608. Be an attentive listener, give a meaningful penance, treat us gently but firmly.
7609. We are all the same children of God. No one ever wants to come out of confession with any anger.
7610. Stress to the person in confession that they are forgiven and how great God's mercy is. There are times I am tempted to doubt the Lord's mercy. At the same time, remind us that it is our duty to avoid those near occasions of sin and to strive to grow closer to God and to grow in holiness.
7611. Thank you. You are doing great job. We feel the love and mercy of our Lord thru you. I love when you give me an advice to make me grow, like when you give me a Saint or the virtue that I have to work on with the help of that Saint. I feel like I'm walking away with a big Hug and a Saint next to me to help me.
7612. Be welcoming, encouraging, and helpful if a person doesn't know the rite of confession. Provide help and encouragement for overcoming the sins confessed.
7613. Give me hope. Offer a challenge or insight. Treat this as my last confession on earth. What else should I know to receive God's grace, his mercy, and his eternal presence in heaven.
7614. Be available and compassionate.
7615. There is a book I picked up recently called *Frequent Confession: Its Place in the Spiritual Life*, by Fr. Benedict Bauer. I found this book very helpful for understanding the role of confession in overcoming venial sin.
7616. It is important to make people aware of the supernatural grace that is part of this sacrament. The grace released by the sacrament is not limited to our own person but sort of spills over all those who were impacted by our sin. I have a specific example in mind involving someone close to me. Without getting into details, my receiving the Sacrament, by God's grace, also did the person involved a great deal of good and the huge problem became less and less.
7617. Ask questions and ask if the penitent if he or she has any questions.

7618. Offer encouragement, compassion and some feedback.
7619. Temptations and the devil are real. It's overcoming these daily tests that we grow in holiness. Our society thinks everything is okay to do, as long as it feels good, but deep inside everyone knows that's a lie, just like everyone's perfect life on Facebook. We're used to instant gratification, but working on our weaknesses is a slow job. Help us. I also like a variety of penances, not just, "Say an Our Father."
7620. Thank you all and God bless you and your ministry! I'd urge you to look back to how the Church used to view and administer the sacrament. We have a rich tradition of holiness that is being watered down. Many priests today are too quick to dismiss sins and generally give penances that are really light. Making such changes will take effort in priests amending their own approach and deepening their own relationship with Jesus in order to teach those practices to the faithful. The faithful need to be challenged to rise up and strive for virtue in all things instead of continuing to live a type of mediocre Christianity.
7621. To be a holy confessor, to which people have a right, a priest must really be a man of prayer.
7622. Be gentle, be patient, take time to put yourself in another person's shoes.
7623. Relate to the human reality of the penitent. Make it comfortable to confess so that the penitent comes back.
7624. Make sure that the person going to confession really and truly is brought to an understanding of the very profound gift of God's mercy and love in his or her life, so as to be uplifted and inspired to do better.
7625. Fathers, how important it is for you to work through whatever interior issues, wounds and sins you have, facing them squarely and honestly with Jesus! The more you understand your own heart in the healing light of Jesus Christ, the more you will be able to understand the hearts of the penitents who are coming to you.
7626. Don't be afraid to suggest things for me to do. Too many times I'm given just one Our Father to pray.
7627. In words and deed, behave as you believe Jesus would.
7628. To assure people that you care and are listening with a merciful heart, give Christ-like counsel and assurance of absolution.
7629. For those who have been away from this very important sacrament, it takes all they have to enter the confessional and speak to Jesus through a priest. Make straight the path.
7630. Look interested. Actively listen. Be compassionate. Be kind. We are already nervous, help to make us feel at ease. Be Christ-like.
7631. Be understanding and kind. Help us through the process of Reconciliation. All the more if we're struggling with things like stuttering.
7632. Please act as a servant of God, not God.
7633. Please adopt an easy way of speaking to penitents.
7634. Be completely honest and not be worried or scared.
7635. Be patient and encouraging. Greet the penitent before starting. Understand that people may be dreadfully nervous and embarrassed. They also may well be beating themselves up over their sins for a long time.
7636. Remove as much as possible your human judgment. Even if that means putting aside traditional language. Connect with your penitent. Be honest and approachable.

7637. Be nonjudgmental.
7638. Be able to explain the nature of and acceptance of forgiveness, repentance and reparation as it applies to the confession. Give guidance on how to draw closer to God.
7639. Express God's mercy, rather than imitate an angry father.
7640. It's almost an impossible situation when you have so many confessions to hear into little time. I would just recommend as best as you can, making each person feel heard so that it can truly feel like an experience of mercy and not like a chore to check off your to-do list!
7641. Take your time with each person, give us advice to help us overcome our sins, don't downplay venial sins, give us practical ways to become holier, and smile at the end.
7642. Listen carefully, don't judge from a human perspective, be empathetic, remind people they are loved no matter what, try to give hope to the distressed, and give meaningful penances (not just a few prayers).
7643. Put yourself in the person's shoes coming to confession.
7644. Sometimes it might be easier just go through the motions, rattling off the same words over and over, but it is most meaningful when you really take the time to listen to what is being said and offer some bit of applicable counsel and encouragement that we should not despair over our sins but trust in God and that with perseverance and his help, we can continue to grow in holiness.
7645. Make me comfortable. Please be available. I do not like to make an appointment to experience this sacrament.
7646. Speak slowly and clearly when giving absolution to allow the beauty of those words to wash over and penetrate our hearts and minds.
7647. Continue to teach the faithful about how important this sacrament is for having a "right relationship with God."
7648. Educate by using the bulletin and homilies on a regular basis.
7649. Offer the Sacrament at least one night per month to allow families to attend, extend the Saturday times, offer it at least once per week in the morning, get rid of the two-times-a-year communal penance services, and talk frequently about the importance of Confession and about frequent reception of the Sacrament in your homilies.
7650. Listen and encourage people that God does forgive.
7651. Make a connection. Be open-minded and thoughtful in your responses. Thoughtfully discuss the person's sins, how the Lord forgives us, and give a meaningful penance. Remember that the absolution you offer can change a person's outlook and connection to our faith dramatically.
7652. Stick to the Rite and give the words of absolution clearly and precisely. Provide the option for anonymous confessions behind a screen. Don't be in a hurry.
7653. Listen, read between the lines.
7654. Listen well, without judging or interrupting, and when I am finished speaking, then give me any spiritual or practical advice, as well as absolution and my penance.
7655. Don't scold. Be kind. Don't act like my confession is keeping you from doing something more important.
7656. Be accessible for us without having to make appointments. Go back to before daily mass, maybe a few days a week, and on Saturday. If confession is so important, help us to receive it.

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7657. Set us at ease, be a good listener and add some encouragement where needed.
7658. Be a good steward of your power. Remember that the person making the confession is vulnerable. I prefer to make appointments rather than wait in line during set times and am grateful when this is an option.
7659. Reassure me that I can start again, that God really does forgive, and that I can be the person he created me to be.
7660. Sound interested by asking questions, which shows that you were really listening.
7661. Put your hand on person's head or shoulder. Give guidance. We need more focus and regular mention of need and benefits of receiving this Sacrament. Great teaching is available, for example, on Youtube, especially in the video "Explaining the faith-Confession" from the Divine Mercy Chapel of the Marian Fathers. Thank you.
7662. I am looking for advice and mercy from Jesus. This should be my experience.
7663. Put a guide outside the confessional. I went for about 20 years without going to confession. That first time back, I needed a refresher. This could be why some people don't go to confession: they're not sure what to do anymore.
7664. Keep to the basics, yet show real understanding.
7665. Remind penitents that a forgotten sin is also forgiven and need not be confessed at a later confession.
7666. It is hard to go to Confession even though it gives me a peace of mind. Do not push the face-to-face because not all people are comfortable with that.
7667. Be sincere, listen, don't judge, help if the person is having trouble communicating, don't hurry too much unless you have been told there is a long-g-g line.
7668. Listen with your heart.
7669. Make us understand we sinned but that we do not have to carry shame around. No matter what we have done, we are still loved, but our actions have consequences and they affect others as well not just us. Help us never to quit trying if we stumble but to get up and keep trying again and again.
7670. Be understanding and caring when people are at their most vulnerable.
7671. Make the person going to confession feel that the priest is Jesus that you are talking to.
7672. Listen closely to the circumstances in the life of the sinner.
7673. First of all, I think the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be mentioned more often. Eternal damnation is so real, yet so many don't believe. Remind us of Jesus' words and actions.
7674. We are all sinners. It is hard to do our best and sometimes we fail. We still want to share in the glory of our Lord now and forever. Make us feel we have that chance despite our wrongdoings.
7675. Show compassion and kindness in your words.
7676. Listen intently. Comment appropriately. Speak compassionately. Be patient. Make it personal as possible not rout.
7677. Feel the difficulty of the experience and respond with kindness and patience.
7678. Help me understand my sins, to look deeply at them so I can avoid whatever leads me to sin.
7679. Be open to any situation the person confessing might be struggling with and offer the best advice in an encouraging manner. Making the advice personal to the situation at hand.
7680. Please provide more frequent opportunities to go to confession.

7681. Be open to all that come to you. Understand that for many this can be one of the hardest moments of their life. I avoided confession for 25 years due to a serious sin in my youth. If confession had been a negative experience, I may not have returned to the church as fervently as I did. People are carrying such big guilt in their hearts that it can be debilitating. Be open to hearing without judgment because they have already judged themselves most harshly. Pray for them. Witnessing a priest pray deeply for you is a profound experience.
7682. Encourage us to continue to receive this sacrament. The more one goes, the richer I have become.
7683. Respond to our questions. Once we learn, we can teach others. Give us the comments of this survey too!
7684. Go to confession yourselves as often as you can!
7685. Remind us constantly of God's desire to forgive.
7686. Please don't ever be like an old pastor who at least 2-3 times a month used confessions he had heard as material for his homilies. He never named names, but I never went to confession there and traveled to the neighboring parishes because I was too afraid of being "de-anonymized," by his saying, "Just the other day a young woman who has only been married one year came to confession and said she was struggling with [fill in the blank]." I cringed every time he did it because I feared the penitent he was referencing could be someone in a pew and how embarrassed that person must have felt to be hearing his or her specific sin from the pulpit. Please don't do things like that which make it harder for Catholics to get to confession.
7687. Be compassionate and try not to speak in a monotone. Priests probably hear many of the same sins, but try to make the experience good for each sinner.
7688. Provide more input and more inspiration.
7689. Emphasize, "You are forgiven," as well as give concrete specific suggestions to improve. Share God's love.
7690. Be open and friendly. Priests are wonderful representatives of Christ. I so appreciate your ability to listen and speak the words of absolution.
7691. Sometimes, priests' responses seem to be rote versus engaged. Always show some interest.
7692. Do not rush the person confessing. Give prompts when there is a lag during the confession.
7693. Know when to speak and know when to remain silent.
7694. Tell me that God has forgiven me so I need to forgive myself. I once heard a priest say that if you took all the sins committed by all the people in the world and distilled them down into one drop of sinfulness, that drop would be nothing compared to the ocean of God's forgiveness. That really put things into perspective for me.
7695. Making the penitent feel comfortable.
7696. First point out the seriousness of sin and how it can lead to the loss of heaven. Make suggestions how to overcome certain sins and to be assured of God's forgiveness if we are truly sorry and have a firm purpose of amendment.
7697. Don't be mean and gruff.
7698. Give us advice on how to combat the sins mentioned during the sacrament.
7699. Don't rush. Listen to what the person is saying. Ask questions if you don't understand.

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7700. Give me a penance that would be a sacrifice. Prayers don't always fill the bill. Perhaps assign corporal works of mercy.
7701. We appreciate any sermons about how to make a good or better confession. Give them regularly to keep us remembering the importance this Sacrament holds.
7702. Please be really patient if someone is going in their second language.
7703. Look with kindness on us.
7704. Make the penance a combination of prayer and works.
7705. Be prayerful when giving absolution. Don't recite the prayer like a parrot.
7706. Listen and engage. Don't let the confessional become a "drive through."
7707. Most of my life reconciliation was a good experience. Going back to the old form of Confession is not going to work for me.
7708. Listen deeply and help person try to find the voice of God in their life. Remind them that God loves them no matter what.
7709. Please don't let personal bias interfere with God's grace.
7710. In my last confession, I felt like it was simply a ritual! Father said nothing. After I confessed my sins, he immediately asked for an act of contrition, and then he said the words of absolution! At one point, he made me rush. I wondered for a moment if it were valid! Be patient, understanding, gentle, speak with kindness...and help us to experience it as a sacred moment of prayer! Let us experience mercy...and love!
7711. Communicate with the penitent in a kind and supportive manner.
7712. I think priests should speak about their own personal experience of the Sacrament in Sunday homilies. Priests too often project themselves as having it all together, living in a state of grace and holiness at all times. How many priests are spiraling out of control into addiction, a sense of entitlement, being holier than thou? Jesus is the Wounded Healer who openly displayed his suffering on the Cross. The Resurrected Christ openly displayed his wounds. Priests should do the same.
7713. Help people understand why they sin and sin's effects on them and others.
7714. The priest should be pragmatic. Availability of confession times should be increased, and priests should suggest a private conference when confessions last more than ten minutes.
7715. Offer confession times that are more accessible.
7716. Talk about what are sins and what can we should if we want to avoid just saying a list.
7717. Listen, be present to each person, offer insight, and let God the Holy Spirit lead you.
7718. Do not rush. Try to be patient.
7719. While being thorough, help the penitent to remember those who are waiting in line and to be as brief and concise as possible. If the situation requires additional time, the priest should ask the penitent to call the rectory later to schedule an appointment.
7720. Most Catholics I know don't go. They don't understand why they should. Teach me how to teach them.
7721. Listen and be compassionate about sins of the flesh.
7722. Maintain a calming, non-judgmental attitude
7723. I know there are lines, but please don't rush me when I come. If I ramble, there are ways to gently guide me back to topic and to move me forward.
7724. Please just remember how nervous we can be when we come, but we come because we love God and want to come home to Him.

7725. Be empathetic to people's struggles.
7726. Thank you!
7727. Many people have a very hard time going to confession because they are ashamed and believe that they are going to be judged by you. This stops them from availing themselves of the Sacrament and from confessing all of their sins. So emphasize God's mercy and love, and acknowledge the penitent's courage to overcome his or her shame. Also, help penitents who aren't sure of exactly what they are to confess.
7728. We need more education on the sacrament and its power. Most of us learned about the sacrament in second grade and have not altered what we say and do much since that time.
7729. Be forthright. Be compassionate. Be honest.
7730. Deepen your own spiritual lives. Be less worried about numbers in the pews or on balancing the books. Use your God given powers to make a lasting difference through your penitents.
7731. These days, my generation (30s) is seeking connection within the church. If we are already coming in for confession, we are probably already involved in some way. But we need spiritual grounding. Confession could be a great tool to make me feel seen, to offer some counseling, and to give mercy and forgiveness.
7732. Please understand that some folks actually dread the whole situation. Kindness and compassion are super important if you want people to come back. Help people to feel good after their confession. I'm so stressed sometimes that I forget that I have been absolved and should be pretty happy about that.
7733. Speak with the greatest warmth and love you possibly can.
7734. Be Jesus with the woman at the well!
7735. Confession is hard. Sometimes you feel like a terrible person confessing all the bad stuff. I find it more helpful when the priest takes a minute to talk to me and reminds me that these are bumps along the way and that God still loves me. Encourage me to keep trying to do my best instead of just moving to the absolution and penance.
7736. Be nonjudgmental.
7737. Make the person feel comfortable.
7738. Train us on how to make a good confession.
7739. Be holy! Be merciful! Be compassionate so the person wants to come back. Let the person know the overwhelming peace that will come from confessing. God has heard it all!
7740. Adhere less to formal ritual prayers and more to simple sincere prayer.
7741. Help the person understand what sins do to his or her relationship with God and why God wants to show mercy and what Mercy will do.
7742. Really listen before commenting.
7743. Focus on God as love.
7744. Be gentle with us just as Jesus would be. Forget the number of prayers for penances and encourage the person to do an act of kindness or offer their Mass for the souls in Purgatory.
7745. Let the penitent cry or express remorse without being rushed.
7746. Do not say words or phrases that will make the penitent feel like he is such a terrible person. Focus on the Reconciliation and not on our past sins that are to be absolved.
7747. Be careful what you say.

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- 7748. Offer guidance and empathy. Dispense with the formalities and let others know that the "rules" or procedures are means not ends.
- 7749. Provide spiritual guidance.
- 7750. Be humble, forgiving and welcoming— and please don't chastise me for not coming at least once a month.
- 7751. My most profound experiences of God's mercy in this sacrament have come because of the openness of the confessor to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 7752. Be present and empathetic. If you're getting tired, I'd personally rather wait a few minutes for you to take a small break than have a negative experience because you're so tired after hearing so many confessions.
- 7753. Affirm God's love and mercy, that we are children of God, that will never leave us, and do so on a very personal level.
- 7754. Have empathy, know how to help the penitent to perceive God's mercy and don't judge them.
- 7755. Be with your penitents as Christ was with the woman at the well: gentle, accepting and honest. Assure us of Christ's love and forgiveness, and try to inspire us to live better lives out of love for Him.
- 7756. Understand that people who go to confession usually feel that they have sinned and want to be forgiven and also receive direction in how to avoid the sin in the future. Recognize that people are saying they need help.
- 7757. Continue to be compassionate while offering advice and directions Absolution is a powerful incentive for participation in the sacrament.
- 7758. Have more times for confession but not right before Mass. Everyone is too rushed. If you have to do them before Mass, allow an hour and have a separate priest do them, not that day's celebrant (if possible).
- 7759. Every person who goes to confession recognizes that she or he has sinned: that's why they are there! Please do not make a big deal over how long they didn't go to confession or act shocked at what we tell you. Don't pry. You are a conduit, not God.
- 7760. Show interest, comfort and make penitents feel safe and validated
- 7761. Listen carefully, share prayer and Scripture, celebrate God's mercy and treat the person as God's beloved.
- 7762. Listen, don't rush, ask questions and give encouragement.
- 7763. People sin out of following a mistaken narrative about their lives. You have to give them a better story than the one they've been following. That takes education, patience, and tact.
- 7764. Manifest a real sense of God's mercy and prayerfulness.
- 7765. Be merciful and compassionate. Understand that you do not walk in my shoes and do not have all the answers. I don't go to confession for a lecture or a theology class.
- 7766. Let God work through you, and stop letting yourself and your ego get in the way. It's okay to admit that you don't have all the answers.
- 7767. Punctuality is pastoral. It is professional. It inspires confidence.
- 7768. Less is more. Fewer, better words. Be aware and manage your confessional line.
- 7769. Let the penitent hear the words of absolution, the Church's words, not some mish-mash of your own sacramental sentimentality.
- 7770. Think about how different groups (for example college women) might view confession differently and approach it compared to older men or women.

7771. Listen with their hearts and, based on the sin, suggest an action as penance. For example, if I'm feeling anger or hurt, to seek out to make amends or to do something for someone else. Be culturally competent with the community you serve. Please don't be on autopilot. Demonstrate your love for us, as a representative of Jesus. We are all children of God.
7772. As a former religion teacher, I feel that priests need to start with the children. Children and teenagers need to have an appreciation for Reconciliation. When priests don't have the time for the kids, then there is something wrong. "Let the little children come to me." How many priests hear kids' confessions during the school year? If as a child you experience God's mercy then that can carry that through to adulthood.
7773. The sacrament should be like a conversation with Jesus that strengthens our personal relationship with the Lord. You are another Christ during the confession. Be patient to draw out our discernment of our spiritual weaknesses.
7774. As a psychotherapist, I'd encourage you to be trained in basic, empathetic listening skills, like not interrupting or cutting people off.
7775. Give your spiritual wisdom to people.
7776. Take your time with penitents, and offer scheduled confessions every day. The availability increases comfort and makes it easier to fit confession into our schedules and to confess more deeply.
7777. Truly listen to each and every confession and provide a thought provoking dialogue.
7778. Don't be too casual. I expect my confessor to be very much like my doctor. Take me seriously, suggest something that makes me correct whatever is wrong, and give me some hope.
7779. Talk about confession from the pulpit. It's not enough that you have confession times. We need to hear it from the ambo.
7780. Realize different people have problems with different sins and that most people try to do their best.
7781. Be as gentle as possible, but take the sins seriously. We need your help to become saints.
7782. Ask the penitent if he prefers to talk more or talk less.
7783. If you don't want to be there, please leave and find a replacement who does. Give grace to the humble and stiff-arm the proud. Don't take confessed sin lightly, even if you think it scrupulosity. It may be meat sacrificed to idols and fine for you but it could be a tremendous stumbling block for that sister or brother.
7784. Try not to rush.
7785. Listen to what the person is saying and how she is saying it. Try to put yourself in her shoes to understand her better. Meet that person where she is. Don't be judgmental, but encouraging. Try to be genuinely helpful, to give each person something to take with her that will help her feel fortified and to do better from now on.
7786. Regard the sacramental exchange as "holy ground," sacred space.
7787. Penitents should be affirmed for their honesty and courage and be helped to be glad for the experience.
7788. Give suggestions and advice, and leave them with a sense of hope!
7789. Don't assume people know the formula to say. I'm a very involved Catholic but because I don't go to confession often (mostly because it's not offered a lot), I

sometimes forget the prayers when I go to reconciliation. Help people along without shaming them.

7790. If time permits, help me to delve deeper into ways not to commit those particular sins again or offer something like reading and prayers to help me with those particular sins. If you are short on time, offer meeting with me at another time by appointment because it is so very helpful to me to go deeper into my situation and to find help.
7791. I would implore you to develop a habit of Eucharistic Adoration daily and God's mercy will flow out healing and rescuing souls in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I would also encourage you to pray before hearing confessions that Our Lady will hinder the evil one from restraining souls who are too weak in their faith and prompt them with the Holy Spirit to come to confession.
7792. Make confession more accessible by offer confession more days and more times. During confession, be kind and understanding. Offer tidbits of wisdom to help us grow, change, and overcome sin.
7793. Be slow and help the penitent open up.
7794. Use scripture and the fathers to bring the full authority of tradition to back up what you say. There is peace in knowing what the church has always taught. Use the woman caught in adultery story to show that he does not condemn, but says, "Go and sin no more."
7795. It's is still really scary to go to confession. Maybe you could help us to learn how to pray in the confessional and how you "forget" the sins we confess.
7796. Pick a couple of the sins mentioned and suggest how we can overcome them.
7797. What you say and how you act can make or break a person's faith in the Church. One bad Confession kept me away for over a decade. How many Catholics have a bad experience and just never come back? Hearing confessions may be just another day for you, but for your parishioners, you are showing them the beautiful Mercy of God. Act like it.
7798. Engage in more prayer time.
7799. Ask your penitents if they feel they are growing in holiness, and what may be blocking greater growth.
7800. Pray always for the grace to be a kind and loving intermediary for God's mercy.
7801. Ask, besides forgiveness, what is the penitent looking for.
7802. Humbly walk with the people God put before you. Respond with God's love and mercy. Encourage the people to see and understand God's intense unconditional love. Pray with them that they leave with hope and a renewed sense of their Baptismal mission to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth.
7803. Organize the lines in your church. Don't make the penitent feel rushed. Welcome them, lay your hands on them for absolution when possible.
7804. Have more times available.
7805. Really listen to me.
7806. Be kind. Help penitents feel loved.
7807. Reassure us of how much God loves us.
7808. If someone confesses something you don't think is a sin, maybe ask him why he thinks it's a problem. He thought it was important enough to come to you about it, so you should at least find out why.
7809. Don't be rushed

7810. Have a good background in the 12-step programs about addiction and also mental illness and emotional illness. Have a good grasp about how our modern society affects people and draws them away from God and how much we have to actually work at our prayer life and how important it is to our happiness and peace. Nobody wants to go to confession for therapy but the hope to find a wise priest who really knows his stuff and knows people and has a very compassionate view of people
7811. We often think we need more than just the words of absolution. It makes it feel like more of a check off box. I like the counsel and friendly conversation that goes along with it.
7812. What would Jesus say and do?
7813. Be very present, humble, loving.
7814. Please turn to St. Joseph for inspiration. Thank you for answering your call to the holy priesthood.
7815. Be compassionate and try to go beyond simple facts and absolution.
7816. Consider that not everyone is capable of expressing her private thoughts! Anxiety is a severe affliction.
7817. Be human. Be kind and caring. And it's weird it doesn't seem like penances are challenging enough.
7818. Offer the option of face-to-face. Welcome, have comfortable seats. Be quiet and peaceful. Smile. Listen for what lies behind the words, for what the person is seeking. Pause before you give a response. Give a meaningful penance involving advice about deepening one's friendship with Christ. Be kind, compassionate, understanding. Once I was waiting for confession in Lourdes and the nervous lady before me came out with a huge smile and said, "He's lovely!" I have always thought since then that is exactly how people must have felt when they met Jesus.
7819. Remember the parables that speak of how much God desires to administer his mercy and then recall that you are that agent. Try your best to model Luke 15. Know how thankful and grateful we are !
7820. Listen with a kind heart.
7821. Provide reassuring words and maybe guide us to certain Scripture passages that would help us through our tough times.
7822. Follow the Holy Spirit's guidance on how each confession is supposed to be. You will be exhausted when you choose to offer confession frequently, but I think it is the key in renewal in any parish. We need confession!
7823. Please give me guidance on how the disciples and saints imitated Jesus and where I can learn more.
7824. Remind me that God loves me, in spite of my sins.
7825. Listen to understand and, as best you can, speak as Christ would, with love, patience and encouragement.
7826. Allow space for grace, be open to questions and a conversation, not simply a script. Be close to Our Lady. Mention confession and your availability for it at every Mass.
7827. Keep being patient, please.
7828. You only show as much mercy as you have allowed yourself to receive from God in the past. Show your parishioners the mercy of God. Love them well. Talk it out with them if they're willing to. Give them penances in relation to their sin or on how they can improve. But most importantly, be a vessel to the Holy Spirit. He knows best.

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7829. Thank you for the gifts you bring to the priestly ministry and for standing in persona Christi.
7830. Please understand that, especially for young women, just entering the Confessional is an extremely brave and vulnerable act. We're alone with a man in authority in a private space, perhaps in an empty church in the evening, sharing the things we may not share with anyone else. So please don't use this moment to preach – I can get that on Sunday. Please welcome me as Jesus welcomed the sinners with whom he had dinner. Because we're all sinners after all, and I'm coming to Confession to experience Jesus's love and joy through you. In other words – please don't be creepy!
7831. Listen. Don't interrogate. Show mercy and compassion. Be encouraging. Give a meaningful penance. Assume it is difficult for the person to be there.
7832. Offer the sacrament often and do it behind a screen. Don't greet the crowd before or after confession to see who's there. Have background noise. Help the chatty to limit their confessions and don't linger too long especially when lines are long. Many need mercy, some need absolution urgently. Trust in the sacrament and pray. Let Jesus work through you. Don't say a lot but do say what's on your heart. If someone needs more, encourage them to come back to spiritual direction, if a crowd has formed. But if you have time, take time. Remember, though, that many come at the last minute.
7833. Offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation for your parishioners as often as possible and openly invite them to come. As a young, working mother, I have always felt that the most difficult part of Confession was getting to Confession. The ability to receive this Sacrament at a time other than shortly before Mass – when I already struggle to wrangle my children (sometimes alone while my husband is away for work) – has been a blessing for me when it happens.
7834. Listen more. Ask us to seek God's will through our own heart.
7835. Post a copy of the Act of Contrition in all confessionals. Never ever say in a homily that you are a hypocrite if you go to communion when you haven't gone to confession at least twice a year. My husband left the church due to a priest who said that, because he had been told by another priest his heart would tell him when he needed to go to confession. Be consistent with your message about confession and don't guilt trip.
7836. Remember that your temperament and demeanor has the potential to draw people closer to the Church and the sacraments or to push them away. Each sacramental encounter is saturated with grace; remember that and act accordingly.
7837. Be nonjudgmental in your approach. Listen. Be understanding. Realize it may have been quite some time since a person went to Confession and try to make her comfortable. It is better to provide a penitent with advice on how to live a better life than to give as a penance two Our Fathers and a Hail Mary. Provide guidance and give good penances.
7838. Remember we are all sinners but God's mercy is beyond our understanding.
7839. Please do not make people feel worthless and shameful. Please offer hope.
7840. Be kind. Listen. Put yourself in the vulnerability of the penitents' shoes and meet them there. Welcome them. It's scary enough, we know we've done wrong and don't need the priest to explain to us what we did wrong.
7841. Have understanding and compassion.
7842. Be patient and caring.

7843. Confession is a very vulnerable experience. Treat it with the gentleness and respect it deserves.
7844. Be patient. Don't always be in a rush. You never know when someone is seeking confession but may be shy or not wanting to bother you, especially if they see you always rushing or running. Most times they'll never stop you and their confession will go unheard. During scheduled times, please have the option for both anonymous and face-to-face. And again, be patient, approachable, kind, understanding and empathetic. If a penitent knows that you, too, are a sinner seeking God's love and mercy then he will be far more likely to seek God's love and mercy from you than if you downplay the importance of reconciliation. Never ever downplay it. Always encourage others to receive the Sacrament for it should be a beautiful encounter with the living God.
7845. Judge not.
7846. I like being reminded of specific reasons to change or things to change for. Obviously I know my sins are wrong. I like hearing other reasons for turning away from sin other than "it's bad."
7847. Be the conduit of Christ's love and forgiveness. Allow the Holy Spirit to work through you. Try to bring less of yourself and more of Christ to the sacrament.
7848. Listen, be firm but gentle, and give direction, like a Scripture verse, a spiritual book from a saint, a story to illustrate a point, or particular prayers and meditations that could help.
7849. Ask questions. Maybe offer suggestions as to why some sins are committed over and over.
7850. Take time to listen to the one in front of you. Be attentive. Don't judge the person for what he or she is saying.
7851. You are dealing with peoples' souls more closely in reconciliation than in any other sacrament because it is so personal.
7852. God's mercy is more transformative when the priest takes the gravity of sin seriously. Easygoing confessors don't help much when it comes to calling sinners to conversion. Being gentle but firm, like Jesus, is best.
7853. Be a listening presence. Be as patient as God. Remind us that we are already loved. Encourage us to continue to try.
7854. Be willing to listen. Be willing to explain if needed. Be able to ask questions and give good answers.
7855. Give a few words of counsel and be firm when needed. Give the penitent the true teaching of the Church, out of concern for his or her soul.
7856. Talk of the need for a good confession but not so often as to belabor the topic. Also give a feeling of satisfaction and never put anyone down.
7857. Share God's unconditional love for each of his sons and daughters and His joy at their reception of the sacrament!
7858. Be approachable and incredibly kind while at the same time speaking hard truths if necessary without sugarcoating things
7859. Show your human side along with God's divinity.
7860. Find that delicate balance between acceptance and understanding the person and holding strongly to the teachings of the faith.
7861. Listen attentively.

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7862. Guide appropriately.
7863. Do not rush people.
7864. Take time, act interested and have care.
7865. Definitely be very firm on church teaching! I want to become a saint, so I don't want you to be overly gentle with me. Help me come up with a plan not to sin again if need be and show me that committing sins and not being consistent with my faith life are very serious. Believe that I can receive God's grace and amend my life, but also let me know that it's going to take hard work!
7866. Tell people they made a good confession if you think they did.
7867. Be compassionate but honest. Make sure you hear us before talking.
7868. Stop concentrating on sexual issues. There are more sins than the pelvic issues. Listen. Stop judging. The sacrament is about reconciliation and healing, not judgment.
7869. Speak of God's love and understanding. Be encouraging.
7870. Be merciful to those with mental health issues, like anxiety and depression. Have a good understanding of them. Don't dismiss them if that is what they confess, but help them when they should go and see a professional for help.
7871. Be understanding. Listen. Support. Love.
7872. Realize that you may be the reason someone grows in their relationship with Christ or decides to leave because of the experience with you in the confessional.
7873. Be sure to tell people that God loves them from the depths of his being.
7874. Become very informed about mental health conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, scrupulosity, and other illnesses so that they can compassionately refer these penitents to professionals who can help. Often only medication will help.
7875. Listen to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to speak through you.
7876. The meditations for the Level 2 and 3 children in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd were amazing in how they showed God's love and mercy and completely changed how I approached the sacrament. I recommend them to priests, and through priest, to everyone.
7877. Listen. Read a short Scripture that has helped you. Give me some Scripture to read as a penance. Speak of God's mercy. Ask me if I am truly sorry: that is a powerful question. Welcome me when I come to confess, because it opens the door to my heart. Show you care.
7878. Be more welcoming. It's still leaves a pit in my stomach to attend confession and I'm 67.
7879. Be fathers. Show strength in compassion, wisdom in fortitude, and love each of the penitents you see individually. Do not be afraid to attack the devils attacking their spirits; defend your children.
7880. Model the acceptance and sincerity of Jesus, with compassionate guidance rooted in love.
7881. A lot of people are often afraid or intimidated. Offer reassurance, maybe a short scripture passage showing God's endless mercy.
7882. Please try to make the sacrament more available. 45 minutes once a week isn't enough. I have a family of six, getting through that in 45 minutes is probably not going to happen. This is actually a deterrent, and has kept us away for more time than is recommended.
7883. Be a voice for God with guidance that shapes sinners into saints.

7884. Try to understand the perspective of the individual, to give advice after listening to the confession. Take advantage of the moment to teach. It's an important form of missionary work.
7885. Show warmth, acceptance, and listening skills.
7886. Make me comfortable. Look me in the eye. Don't take things too seriously.
7887. Arm penitents by giving us advice, a prayer card pertinent to our struggles, or simply being present. Even when I'm confessing and a priest goes "Mmhm" after each thing I confess, it shows me that he is present, not just passively listening. Also, we need more confession times and more accessible especially for the working person (during the week)--even early morning (6-8am). It is desperately needed.
7888. Offer both types of confession to your parish. My boys are comfortable with face-to-face and I think that's great, but I'm not.
7889. I have always experienced a deeper understanding of God when priests don't speak in the abstract of "the communion of saints" and "the angels" or "damnation," etc. but rather relate Scripture to how I could become a better person in the image of Christ right now, today, in this lifetime, in this moment.
7890. Listen closely, know that it is scary to open yourself up to admit your failings. Encourage us to do better next time, to be kind to one another and ourselves.
7891. Choose your words carefully; remember there is still a human being—a person—on the other side. Words have a significant impact on how penitents will receive the message and interpret God's grace.
7892. Encourage face-to-face confession, if possible.
7893. Make the penance as unique to the situation and sins as possible. This has made me take more ownership of my habits, relationship with God, and my soul. I'm more perceptive of God's mercy when the penance is unique and tailored to whatever sins I presented—and it is especially novel when the priest gets to know me and shows interest in what will help me grow spiritually.
7894. Active listening is so important. Ask us what bothers us most or what is most significant to us, and why.
7895. Please don't make confession a psychological counseling session. Let's make it quick and let me get out of there.
7896. Not in the confessional, but maybe provide more instruction and resources on how to make a good examination of conscience and confession, especially sins of omission.
7897. Remind us of God's unfailing love.
7898. Be real. Don't give the same penance to every penitent.
7899. Give easy penances. Do not ask the penitent to come up with his own penance. Most will be too hard on themselves or come up with too difficult a penance to do.
7900. If the conversation moves to a personal level (given there is enough time) and is directed at me, it doesn't feel like confession is read from a book. Also please consider giving a penance that aligns with the sin (like the three Hail Marys devotional for purity)
7901. Insert yourselves in the perspective of the person you are speaking with. Ask questions along the way, but not in a prying or interrogative manner, but in a personal and friendly way, trying to better understand the person before you.
7902. It is God's forgiveness we are seeking. Be kind. It hard to go to confession. Point us to the scriptures.

7903. Remember how vulnerable confession can be for people. Any hint of “you’re doing this wrong,” “wow that’s really bad,” or even “none of those are mortal sins, you didn’t need to confess them” can really stick with us.
7904. Please know people whose lives are different than your own, so you understand the difficulty of situations that people confess. Be good and close friends with some folks in various states of life and ask them about the stuff that's hard for them in their vocation. My husband and I, for example, practice NFP, but our reality is not textbook and NFP has been a cross that we have not seen fruits from even though we've done "all the right things." I think what I'm saying is, please don't just "name, number, and kind," us, and know enough about the realities of various states in life that you can understand why someone is struggling with a sin so you can advise us on how to think about it going forward.
7905. Be gentle. Sometimes it is difficult to confess. The guilt can be consuming. And encourage us to be best.
7906. Have a good spiritual director and receive the sacrament of reconciliation often so you know what it is like to be on the receiving side. Stay close to the heart of Jesus.
7907. Consider that the Sacrament may feel very superficial to some parishioners and that the administration of penance and absolution may further a patriarchal impression of the church hierarchy.
7908. Many priests have done a very good ministry as confessors. Some need to some extra time on the other side of the screen. And some need to feel what mercy truly is.
7909. If a priest is narrow minded, bigoted, chauvinistic, angry, frustrated with society, or focused too much on political outcomes, he will not make a good confessor. If a priest respects and is respected by his parishioners, regardless of differences in beliefs, the sacrament will be that much more profound, and more like a gift instead of an obligation grudgingly carried out by those on either side of the curtain.
7910. Lay people want to grow in holiness! We desperately desire to conquer our sins, especially habitual sins, and we desire your wisdom and practical advice for doing so.
7911. Do not rush others and be sensitive as to what we are confessing and why we came to receive Reconciliation.
7912. Try being in the sinner’s shoes. Remember Jesus’ attitude towards sinners. Give direction without condemning.
7913. Understanding what you are really giving me. Please don’t hurry!
7914. Challenge us to be better. I’ve tried harder and been better when I’ve been humbled and pushed.
7915. Please hear with Jesus’ ear. Remember your role as the conduit of God’s loving mercy. Remind us of the grace that showers this encounter. Thank us for coming to this sacrament in humility and expectation. Hold us in prayer.
7916. Please keep praying! I am grateful for the hours you spend as confessors, so knowing that you continue to entrust all your words and thoughts to Christ, and that you are becoming Christ for me and other sinners is a great comfort.
7917. Make it accessible! An hour a day outside work hours, multiple confessors at peak times. If there’s consistently a line on Saturday afternoon there needs to be multiple confessors at the time.
7918. Humility.

7919. Love, love, love. The person is having a hard time dealing with personal sinfulness. Lectures do not work.
7920. Be mindful that it is the contrite dialogue presented through the penitent that enables the confessor to be the servant of Christ's reconciling grace.
7921. Be open to hearing and 'seeing' the person before you. Most of them are probably mortified of walking into a confessional. I am.
7922. Love and be loving.
7923. Just plain love, understand and to make us feel good about ourselves as God's children.
7924. Confession isn't just about that moment. It's about deciding to confess and then avoiding sin after confession. How can you make the moments after confession count and lead us to a changed life or outlook?
7925. Many of my struggles with confession have been because a few priests forgot that my vocation as a wife and mother is not like theirs. There are sins that I struggle with that they may not, and vice versa. Meet people in the moment and try really to see their struggles. Don't write them off because they seem silly.
7926. Don't rush, be fully present.
7927. Be a contemplative in action and see beyond what is seen. There are stories behind each person.
7928. Counsel is not necessary, especially if you are new in your vocation.
7929. Remember the person has chosen to come to experience God's love and forgiveness. If you're judgmental or unnecessarily condemning, it does not help the person experience God's love and compassion.
7930. Think with prudence about how best to show the compassion and mercy of God, while also calling on the sinner to "go and sin no more."
7931. Please help me understand and believe in God's infinite love and mercy as I struggle to have faith in it. Please speak to me as a fellow human being, not a judge. Please be a conduit of God's mercy.
7932. Make it more available! Offer confession before daily Mass, after Masses, more options than just half an hour on Saturdays.
7933. Be gentle and assuring so that people leave the confession knowing God's grace. If I feel any shame from a confessor, it does a lot of damage to my already wounded relationship with the Church.
7934. Demonstrate your dedication to Jesus. I find it really hard to confess to someone who likes to go to the casinos, doesn't get the needs of the poor and fails to understand communities on the margins.
7935. Don't minimize the sins of the penitent. Acknowledge a need for hope in the possibility for growth in virtue. Don't write off any sins as "no big deal," particularly due to someone's state in life. The lay faithful are up to the challenge of turning from sin and growing in virtue; call us to greater holiness!
7936. Remember always that you are in persona Christi and that our Lord received sinners with hospitality and love.
7937. You are a replacement for Jesus and I'm there to know His love and compassion.
7938. Stay connected to the real world. Many priests are out of touch with what laity have to deal with on a regular basis.
7939. Encourage us to return often and be available

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- 7940. Don't try to evoke in us a permanent fear of going to hell.
- 7941. Ask questions for clarification and ask if advice is wanted.
- 7942. Support us to move ahead.
- 7943. For penances, give meditations that draw us deeper into the Heart of His love, penances to help build virtue and fight vice.
- 7944. Encourage more scripture reading and praying for the family. Walk us gently through the rite. Ask us to pray for you.
- 7945. Incorporate counsel and spiritual advice.
- 7946. Be sensitive to cultural differences. Some of us grew up Catholic in another country, we may have thick accents, or unique ways to express a contrite heart.
- 7947. Listen with real love and don't act superior.
- 7948. See yourselves in those who come to you for confession. Be a friend as well as a confessor. Don't react with shock or disdain to our sins, no matter how horrible you may think they are. Be empathetic. Be kind.
- 7949. Give specific tips about how to prepare for a good confession, acknowledge that it is nerve wracking and reassure us that it is worth a try. Only advertise your confession times if you will actually provide them as advertised. Someone who has overcome dread and cold sweats to finally show up, only to find out there's no one there and no info may never return.
- 7950. Because you are in the person of Christ, you always need to be fatherly and merciful. It's very easy to tell when a priest is just trying to get you out the confessional because the line is long. No one wants to feel like a herd of cows going through a gate. I understand the balance of not staying in the confessional for too long because other people might really need to go to confession if they want to receive that day at Mass. But there can be a balance of going to confession and getting counsel, and if the situation needs, the priest should tell the person to schedule spiritual direction to give them the proper time and attention. Also, I think there should be a subtle but excited sense of anticipation of waiting to absolve people of their sins. That sense of anticipation for the penitent is an echo of the Father's anticipation for his children to come home again.
- 7951. Encourage us to come back!
- 7952. Remember that the person before you is probably broken. Be a good listener. Don't be afraid to set us straight. Don't placate.
- 7953. Make sure you are letting penitents know you are happy to be there in persona Christi, absolving sins.
- 7954. Be truly present.
- 7955. Be a spiritual father. Act like you're happy to see us.
- 7956. Be a man of true prayer and pay close attention to Philippians 2:6-11.
- 7957. Offer more opportunities during the the week for the Sacrament. Provide more spiritual direction. Give more explanation and encouragement on receiving the Sacrament.
- 7958. Focus on what the person is saying, ask questions if needed. If possible, try to tailor the penance to the individual. Don't cut them off before they're finished.
- 7959. Know that the penitent approaches confession with mixture of dread, nervousness, and anticipation -- no matter how often they go to confession. I think that CCD and

RCIA might want to rethink how they teach about confession so that they stress God's love above all else.

7960. Remember that you are acting as the Person of Christ to the person making their confession. What would Jesus say or do for that person? How would Jesus advise them?
7961. Offer confession frequently and advertise it well. Having a lovely setting and a crucifix or statue or painting of Jesus to focus on during the Sacrament. That will help us experience his mercy more profoundly.
7962. Remember we live in the real world.
7963. Many of us are trying our best, but are carrying huge loads, and are not perfect at it. Don't make our burden worse by pontificating or holding up standards we just told you we can't follow. Help instead of condemning. Do try to do what Jesus would have done: forgive.
7964. Get across to us that God really does love us, that he's not keeping score, or waiting for us to screw up.
7965. We want to feel God's love and mercy. If we were not sorry we wouldn't be there. I want to talk to Jesus.
7966. It is hard, really hard, for me as a woman to confess to a priest. So please be understanding.
7967. Listen well and ask questions so that we understand the situation. Be encouraging and slightly challenging. Reminding us of God's mercy would be good, too.
7968. Take it seriously.
7969. Do not make it a chore. Show that you care and are happy to direct or open an encounter with the Lord.
7970. Don't minimize sin. Be spiritually well read. Beg the Holy Spirit to do God's will and save souls. Don't give generic advice that ignores what has been confessed as if you were not listening. Pay attention to the line and the acoustics of the confessional so that people are not afraid to confess their sins freely. Be humble, and talk about God, not yourself.
7971. Take care of yourselves well. Endeavor to live in community with one another so that you are getting the experience of give and take, ebb and flow, growth and humility. Make sure your own spiritual life is well-tended so that you are receiving good fruit to then share with the people whose confessions you are called to hear.
7972. Love the sinner, face-to-face or behind the screen. Be Christ who forgives and gives hope. Don't be 'Father Dramatic' but say those beautiful words of absolution with love and joy.
7973. Be direct in your adherence to the teaching of the holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We need faithful Confessors.
7974. It's not about you. You're not going to give the advice that "saves" anyone in confession. And it's not even about them, because confession isn't a self-improvement strategy. It's just about God's mercy and channeling that as much as possible.
7975. I had a priest who would always ask permission and then place both hands on my head when giving absolution, which was really beautiful and moving.
7976. Be kind, make the person feel comfortable, not rushing them.

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7977. Listening is obviously important, but sometimes asking questions is extremely helpful. As a lawyer, I have to listen first, and ask enough questions to determine the facts, and guide the client's understanding of the issues.
7978. Creative penances help! Our normal confessor gives everyone ten Our Fathers, no matter what.
7979. Listen, listen, listen. Put your emphasis on how much God loves us, wants us to grow and gives us everything we need.
7980. Remind me of God's love.
7981. Take some classes in therapy. Sometimes people want to discuss things that are difficult and those classes would be helpful.
7982. Be aware that perfectionism is a big problem in our society and that many people coming to confession are affected by it, even if only subtly. The perfectionist has a hard time believing that mercy applies to himself.
7983. Ask if there is anything they want to discuss.
7984. Pray that God show us our sins with clarity, and listen without your motor running. Don't try to give advice, just assure us of God's love and give us a penance that will help us connect with that love.
7985. Don't judge or be harsh in your opinions. Help us understand the sin and how that affects our relationship with God.
7986. I go to confession hoping for a priest who can offer suggestions of prayers, practices of discipline, a study, readings, or any combination of things that will help me grow in faith and avoidance of sin. An infinite number of Hail Marys or other prayers will not accomplish that.
7987. Reflect deeply on the meaning of the sacrament your role to extend God's mercy and promote healing. The sacraments are not intended to be ego trips and confessors especially must learn not to treat them as such.
7988. Tell the penitent that she or he is loved by God
7989. Show understanding and forgiveness.
7990. Remind each of us that we have God's spark in us and to seek it out.
7991. Listen to us. Put yourself in our shoes. Don't be judgmental. Be compassionate as Christ is compassionate. Remember that God is love.
7992. I always appreciate a truly peaceful, calming man of God. Remember, most of us seeking reconciliation are in a state of sin and regret. We need calm, "the peace that surpasses understanding" that only God can give.
7993. Show warmth. You're probably going to be asked to extemporize, and when you do so, you need to be conscious of in whose Person you are extemporizing.
7994. You are there "in persona Christi." Remind yourself of this as each person comes to you.
7995. Remember that you are acting in persona Christi and people are opening their wounded hearts and minds to you. Being too harsh or too nice reveals a priest's personal bias, not Christ's love, mercy, and truth.
7996. I had some experiences recently when the priest gave me prayers, a novena, and litany that I wasn't familiar with, either as my penance, or just as a suggestion, and these have deepened my prayer life and given me a better understanding of Christ's mercy. It also showed me that the priest was really listening and understanding where I was coming from.

7997. Please listen carefully to what is being said, not just the words but the feelings behind the words.
7998. Accept that you cannot know a person's heart. Let us tell you what we think we can do better to live as Jesus taught. Guide gently, laugh often and don't worry: God is taking care of what we really need to know.
7999. Give empathy, sympathy, spiritual direction, forgiveness, and love.
8000. If possible, get to know the penitent. Be kind and merciful.
8001. Let us tell details. We're trying to root out the sin, not just receive absolution. And don't ever tell us, "The only spiritual problem is mortal sin; take everything else to a therapist!"
8002. Listen to women and learn from them.
8003. Help us to believe that if we are sorry God will really forgive us through you.
8004. Please understand that we are out in a difficult world and we need a helping hand, a strong, but loving relationship. I want to see the face of God in my confessor.
8005. The most important thing you do is listen.
8006. Read the Gospels and act as Jesus would.
8007. Make it all about the love of the Father when a soul comes to confess his or her wrongdoings. Think about the courage it took to come and speak. Think about the shame that is inherent in sharing and admitting your sins.
8008. Be good listeners, especially to women. St. Teresa of Avila said women need to talk and we sometimes do. I would also say be patient and especially kind to someone who is afraid of confession or has been away. You will bring many souls closer to God.
8009. Listen and respond with compassion. Remember that God is forgiving the sins, not just you.
8010. I need to hear a response, not just silence and absolution, which make me feel unheard. I don't need a therapist but a word of guidance is gratefully received.
8011. Be kind, welcoming, nonjudgmental and forgiving like our Lord!
8012. Think about laying your hands on us as you give absolution.
8013. The rite of confession is important. But speak conversationally to the penitent, knowing that the Holy Spirit will give the words. It doesn't have to be high spiritual language. Speak in "normal" conversation.
8014. Stop treating confession as a burden and a task. If your cup is full stay out of the box!
8015. Show the same attitude of mercy that Jesus did.
8016. Listen. Try to identify a root issue (maybe ask the penitent if he or she can identify it). Give very brief advice. Give a thoughtful penance. Even if you're going to give a Hail Mary, ask the person to reflect on something Mary at the Cross, or at Annunciation, or at Jesus burial, or at Presentation.
8017. Understand real life struggles. Be open.
8018. Approach God's children with love. Many have not received the education or guidance needed. We need to be encouraged to read scripture, God's living word, and the Catechism.
8019. I've found attending reconciliation services with individual confessions more meaningful. We don't have this very often. I sometimes feel priests are too rushed and stretched too thin to optimally minister this sacrament. Retired priests often are my best confessors.

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8020. Remind us that confession is real and God wants us to come back to him.
8021. Emphasize God's love for us.
8022. Realize there is more to a sin. Life circumstances have a strong bearing on the occasion of sin. Give support and advice but don't lecture.
8023. Listen. Perhaps engage more. Ask follow up question to what the penitent is saying. Even if there are serious issues being confessed, always be patient and compassionate.
8024. Show a little joy and eagerness to help!
8025. Talk more from your heart, less from the book. This way people can relate more to a priest.
8026. Search your heart. Put yourself in another's shoes.
8027. The words of absolution are so sweet and give such relief in being unburdened. That is such a welcome Mercy!
8028. Always let the penitent know how happy Jesus is that he or she came to confession. Be compassionate. Tell the penitent that he or she made a good confession. Help the penitent to avoid sin and grow in holiness. Be kind but truthful, because sin kills. Don't minimize the seriousness of sin. But let penitent know that Jesus' grace is more powerful than sin.
8029. Please preside, similar to how you would preside at Mass. It's uncomfortable to have to initiate the conversation or the dialogue in the sacrament. Example, begin with the sign of the cross, etc., as spelled out in the actual ritual. Practicing a more standard approach and then guiding the penitent through the sacrament allows us to be present, celebrate, be open, and receive.
8030. Spend time outside of the confessional brainstorming and preparing potential penances. Well prepared confessors can adapt well to the person in front of them; we can tell when someone is well prepared.
8031. Make this sacrament a priority in the life of your community. Inquire with parishioners what times work or don't work, and ask questions to get feedback anonymously. Talking with persons about their experiences regularly will help this grow.
8032. Preach, encourage, and joyfully proclaim the goodness of this sacrament and its link with baptism. Lead by example, like Pope Francis, in receiving the sacrament at parish celebrations of this sacrament. Thank you for offering this sacrament and the sacrifices you make to do so.

## **About the Missionaries of Mercy**

The Missionaries of Mercy have a three-fold mission of mercy that is their mandate: to preach about the Lord's merciful love, to make that mercy as available as possible to as many as possible through the Sacrament of Confession, and to become more and more an icon of the Father's merciful love and the Church's maternal compassionate solicitude.

Missionaries of Mercy are priests mandated by the Holy Father to hear confessions freely in every diocese throughout the world and are authorized to lift certain Reserved Sins that normally require the permission of the Apostolic See.

### **Origin**

Pope Francis called, from December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016, an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy to direct our attention and actions “on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's actions in our lives . . . a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.”

The Holy Father commissioned, on Ash Wednesday 2016, the Missionaries of Mercy. He said on in anticipation of that occasion:

“During Lent of this Holy Year, I intend to send out Missionaries of Mercy. They will be a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the People of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith. There will be priests to whom I will grant the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, so that the breadth of their mandate as confessors will be even clearer. They will be, above all, living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon. They will be missionaries of mercy because they will be facilitators of a truly human encounter, a source of liberation, rich with responsibility for overcoming obstacles and taking up the new life of Baptism again. They will be led in their mission by the words of the Apostle: ‘For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all’ (Rom 11:32). Everyone, in fact, without exception, is called to embrace the call to mercy. May these Missionaries live this call with the assurance that they can fix their eyes on Jesus, ‘the merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God’ (Heb 2:17).” (Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction *Misericordiae Vultus*)

### **Appointment and Supervision**

The appointment of a Missionary is exclusively reserved to the Pope. The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization is responsible for watching over the exercise of their ministry and for receiving from priests, with the recommendation of their respective Bishop or religious superior, new applications.

## **Extension of Mandate**

At the close of the Jubilee of Mercy, on November 20, 2016, Pope Francis indefinitely extended the mandate of the Missionaries of Mercy provided the Missionaries themselves, in conversation with their religious superiors, were willing. Pope Francis wrote:

“An experience of grace lived out by the Church with great effectiveness in the Jubilee Year has certainly been the service of the Missionaries of Mercy. Their pastoral activity sought to emphasize that God places no obstacles in the way of those who seek him with a contrite heart, because he goes out to meet everyone like a father. I have received many testimonies of joy from those who encountered the Lord once more in the sacrament of Confession. Let us not miss the opportunity to live our faith also as an experience of reconciliation. Today too, the Apostle urges us: ‘Be reconciled to God’ (2 Cor 5:20), so that all who believe can discover the power of love which makes us ‘a new creation’ (2 Cor 5:17).”

“I thank every Missionary of Mercy for this valuable service aimed at rendering effective the grace of forgiveness. This extraordinary ministry does not end with the closing of the Holy Door. I wish it to continue until further notice as a concrete sign that the grace of the Jubilee remains alive and effective the world over. As a direct expression of my concern and closeness to the Missionaries of Mercy in this period, the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization will supervise them and find the most suitable forms for the exercise of this valuable ministry.” (His Holiness Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*)

## **Characteristics**

As the various papal texts indicate, Missionaries of Mercy are to be:

1. Living signs and agents of the Father’s welcome to all those in search of his forgiveness;
2. Heralds of the joy of forgiveness and inspiring preachers of mercy;
3. Welcoming, loving, and compassionate Confessors, especially attentive to the difficult situations of each person.

## **Mandate**

The role of Missionaries of Mercy comprises three primary aspects: preaching about mercy, making that mercy as available as possible to as many as possible through the Sacrament of Confession, and becoming ever more an icon of the Father’s merciful love and the Church’s maternal compassionate solicitude.

The Missionaries of Mercy have been given two special faculties that are usually unavailable to priests. First, they are not be limited in geographic location in terms of hearing confessions. Second, they are able to absolve sins in five cases otherwise reserved to the Holy See.

## **Reserved Sins**

The Holy Father has granted the Missionaries the authority to absolve the ecclesiastical penalties and guilt associated with the following five crimes/sins, normally reserved to the Apostolic See:

1. Profaning the Holy Eucharist by taking the Eucharistic species away or keeping them for a sacrilegious purpose
2. Using physical force against the Pope
3. Absolving a priest who has sought to forgive someone in confession with whom he has committed a sexual sin.
4. Absolving a priest who has directly violated the sacramental seal of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, revealing something a penitent communicated to him.
5. Absolving someone who has recorded with a technical device what a priest or penitent has said in the Sacrament of Confession (whether real or simulated, meaning whether it was an actual confession or whether someone was impersonating a priest or penitent), or absolving someone who has published and spread such a recording through the means of social communication.

## **Relationship to Local Bishops**

Missionaries are appointed along with a recommendation letter from their bishop or religious superior. Missionaries may also be invited by individual Diocesan Bishops to give missions or facilitate specific initiatives with a particular attention given to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Pope Francis wrote: "I ask my brother Bishops to invite and welcome these Missionaries so that they can be, above all, persuasive preachers of mercy. May individual dioceses organize 'missions to the people' in such a way that these Missionaries may be heralds of joy and forgiveness. Bishops are asked to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with their people so that the time of grace made possible by the Jubilee year makes it possible for many of God's sons and daughters to take up once again the journey to the Father's house. May pastors, especially during the liturgical season of Lent, be diligent in calling back the faithful 'to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace' (Heb 4:16)." (His Holiness Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction *Misericordiae Vultus*)

## **Care for Fellow Priests**

Every priest is called by ordination to be an "ambassador of Christ" with regard to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Holy Father's mandate of the Missionaries of Mercy, in a special way, provides for an outreach to brother priests, since several of the reserved sins that Missionaries have been given the faculties to lift concern those only priests, or predominantly priests, might commit. This indicates a special papal solicitude for Missionaries to be instruments of reconciliation for their priest brothers.

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**For More Information**

Please visit: [missionariesofmercyusa.org](http://missionariesofmercyusa.org)

