



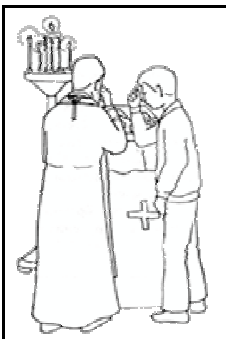
# Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes

(Psalm 119:12)



## ***“Father, when should I come to confession, and what is the proper way to “do” confession?”***

Well, first off we don't “do” confession. We come to it, much like the Prodigal Son came back to his Father (St. Luke 15:11-32). Confession in the Orthodox Church is not some rote behavior where we come and just rattle off a laundry list of things we have done wrong. It isn't a drive-thru window at the Burger King of Heaven: *“I'll take 4 cursings, 5 arguments, and a side of laziness...to go, please!”* ☺ Confession, however, should be utilized as often as necessary! Especially when we feel in our hearts that there is something, or *some things* which have caused us to separate ourselves from Christ and His Church. Note, it is never Christ who separates from us, but it is we who separate from Him through our sin.



When we feel in our hearts that it is time then we should come (and every 6 weeks to two months is a good rule—and anyone who argues they haven't sinned in that span, we should talk!) However, coming to confession even more regularly is encouraged! When it is time, we should examine our thoughts for the things that are burdening our consciences. Then, usually after Vespers, and in some cases before Liturgy, Father will come out and stand next to the ikon stand in the front of the Church. When it is your turn, come up, make the sign of the cross, and kiss the Gospel, Cross, or ikon on the stand and bow your head. It is also traditional to kneel...but given our arrangement at Mission Central that is not always doable. The priest then usually will give some opening words of encouragement and prayer and then let the person give an account of the things that are bothering his/her conscience. The priest listens non-judgmentally, and when the person is finished he compassionately offers advice in his capacity as a spiritual father. He then prays the prayer of absolution over the head of the person and when finished they again kiss the Gospel, the Cross, or ikon, and then ask the priest for his blessing (check out last week's insert on that!). Then the person goes forth from the Church giving thanks to God for the opportunity to repent and get another chance to live a good and holy life, being mindful of the advice the priest has offered.

