

Shiloh IVF Ministry

IVF Examination of Conscience & Confession Guide

IVF Examination of Conscience

Did you/your spouse/partner masturbate to provide a specimen of sperm? (See Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 2252)

Did you use a (masturbated) sample of donor sperm for IVF? Did you make use of donated egg(s) for IVF? (CCC 2376)

Were embryonic child(ren) created in a depersonalized way outside of the marital act? (CCC 2377)

Were any embryo(s) discarded based on initial appearances or genetic tests? (CCC 2258) Did any embryo(s) die in the thawing process or in being donated to science for research?

Are any embryo(s) still frozen? Have you prayerfully discerned how to best care for them?

If you had a successful pregnancy but multiple embryos, did you abort (selectively reduce) any extra fetus(es) for the management of the pregnancy? (CCC 2270-2275)

Did you pursue other options outside of IVF, such as surrogacy/gestational carrier? (CCC 2376)

Were you rash or unreasonable in your pursuit of pregnancy? (CCC 2378)

Were you fighting with God's will in order to act on your own will for your life?

Were you/your spouse/partner pressured into pursuing IVF? Did it place a strain on your marriage/relationship?

Did the cost of IVF place overwhelming financial strain on your family?

Were any living child(ren) in your family neglected emotionally during the IVF process?

How has your child(ren) born of IVF been impacted? Have you been open with them and met their emotional needs?

Some helpful general Examination of Conscience guides can be found at: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance/examinations-of-conscience>; <https://bulldogcatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/a-detailed-catholic-examination-of-conscience-2nd-ed.pdf>; and https://bismarckdiocese.com/documents/Adult%20Faith%20Formatio/Examin-Adults_SevenDeadly.pdf

How to go to Confession

1. Using this examination of conscience and/or a different general exam (links will be in footnotes below), reflect on the sins in your life and ask the Holy Spirit's guidance on what needs to be brought to the Lord.
2. Upon entering the confessional, begin with the sign of the cross and by saying, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [timeframe] since my last confession. These are my sins..." and begin stating your sins.
 - a. It can be helpful if you provide context for the priest. For example, you may want to state your age, whether you are married, and if you are bringing anything in particular, such as IVF, into confession.
 - b. Some confessionals provide a screen between the priest and the penitent. Some are set up for the two people to directly face each other. If it helps, find a parish with a set-up that makes you feel comfortable; you can even call ahead of time for a confession outside of regular confession times if you would like more time to receive guidance from the priest.
3. The priest will give you a penance (something to do or pray after your Confession). He may also offer guidance, though this is not always the case.
4. The Priest will ask you to pray the Act of Contrition. Many versions are available; one example is:
 - a. O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.
5. The priest will extend his hands and pray the Prayer of Absolution. Your response is "Amen." The priest may also say, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good." Your response is, "His mercy endures for ever."
6. The priest will conclude the sacrament by saying to go in peace. The proper response is to thank the priest, and then as soon as possible, go to pray/do the penance which the priest assigned to you.