



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 9, 2011

Smart Phone App Helps Catholics with Confession

An Indiana software company has developed a new smart phone application to help Catholic Christians prepare for the sacrament of Confession. "Confession: A Roman Catholic App" features a "personalized examination of conscience" that is designed to help users prepare for Confession with a priest in real time.

"Our desire is to invite Catholics to engage in their faith through digital technology," Patrick Leinen, co-founder of the Indiana-based company Little iApps, told the [Reuters](#) news service.



Priced at \$1.99, the password-protected smart phone app does not replace going to Confession, but is meant to smooth the way for the actual rite, which typically means confessing one's sins to a priest in a confessional booth. With the user's age and sex as a starting point, the app provides a checklist based on each of the Ten Commandments to help the user examine his or her conscience. It also provides a step-by-step guide to Confession to help those who have not gone through the rite in a while prepare for it.

Leinen said that he and fellow developers were inspired to create the smart phone resource after hearing the Pope's call for more use of social media by the Church. "Taking to heart Pope Benedict XVI's message from last year's World Communications Address, our goal with this project is to offer a digital application that is truly new media at the service of the word," he said.

During the address in January of this year, the Pope invited Catholic Christians "confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible."

As Leinen and his team of designers began to flesh out the smart phone application, they went to their local bishop and asked for "two forms of church approval known as an imprimatur and a nihil obstat," reported the [Catholic News Agency](#). "This unique process involved submitting all variations of the app's text in written form to Bishop Kevin C. Rhodes of Fort Wayne-South Bend."

Leinen said that they tried to cover all the contingencies in providing what the Church would need to give its blessing to the resource. "All the possible options were sent in," he said. "We wanted to make sure that we were really in line with the Church in what we were doing."

Father Dan Scheidt, who helped the company develop the app and get the blessing of Bishop Rhodes, told [New York Times](#) columnist Maureen Dowd that the app helps Catholic believers prepare for the potentially stressful confession rite. "I have always allowed cheat sheets in the confessional for people who want to be sure they get all of their sins," Scheidt told Dowd. "Essentially, this provides an electronic list. Human relations are shifting more and more to being mediated by some of these gadgets. If this is the bridge for people to have a more meaningful encounter about what's deepest in their heart, I think it's going to serve the good."



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News stories on the web largely poke fun at the new app with headlines such as “Bless me iPhone for I have sinned” and “Hail Mary! Catholic Church Blesses iPhone App.” Dowd, herself a Catholic, began her own column with a somewhat sacrilegious parody of the Lord’s Prayer, complaining that “Nothing is sacred anymore, even the sacred.”

Nonetheless, Leinen said the app has already aided at least one person in returning to the sacrament after 20 years. “We hope many more will take advantage of this new confession resource,” he said.



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