

Absolution

The priest as a minister of the whole Church now declares forgiveness from God and your reconciliation with the Church. He extends hands over your head and says:

God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thanksgiving and Dismissal

Before finishing, the priest may give you a “penance”. This is really some response to what has happened; a decision to be more loving; a desire to become a better listener; to be generous. He then leads you in thanking God for his mercy with a prayer such as one of the following:

1. Give thanks to the Lord who is good. His mercy endures forever.
2. The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.
3. May he bring you safely to his kingdom in heaven.

Glory to God forever! Amen

We may also praise God for this wonderful gift.

NOTE: These 2 pages (4 sections) are arranged so they can be printed back to back and center folded as a booklet.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Introduction

One of the ways in which the Church invites us to celebrate the sacrament of penance is by making our personal confession. This sheet is to help us celebrate that sacrament a little better. It is very different to the old way many of us were taught at school! But it is the authentic way designed by the Church.

Celebration of the Sacrament

Preparation

The most important preparation for celebrating this sacrament of God’s forgiveness is to forgive one another. We pray in the Our Father: ‘forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.’ Immediately before making our confession we can prepare by praying for forgiveness, by reflecting on the Word of God, and by examining our conscience in the light of God’s Word.

Greeting

The priest welcomes you warmly and with kindness.

I make the sign of the cross which the priest usually makes as well.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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The priest then invites us to put our trust in God.

There are a number of forms of greeting; the priest may use any one of these or similar words.

1. May God who has enlightened every heart help you to know your sins and trust in God's mercy. AMEN.

2. May the Lord Jesus welcome you. He came to call sinners, not the just. Have confidence in him.

3. May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow.

4. Come with confidence to the Lord who invites all who labor and are overburdened to come to him for rest. (Romans 8:39)

5. Be at peace and know that nothing can separate you from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus or Lord.

If you are unknown to the priest it is useful to tell the priest something of yourself. This helps the priest to understand you and any problems you may have. You may also say when you last received the sacrament.

Reading from the Word of God

You or the priest may now use a passage from scripture to read aloud. Scripture is the word of God and can speak to us about the lives we lead and call us to conversion. Our confession may then be our response to God's word. They are on a separate sheet.

Confession of sins and acceptance of penance

You then tell your sins in the best way you can. It may be confessing sinfulness and sins. It may be talking of failures, weakness, problems, hopes or fears; about growth or lack of

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growth to holiness; about the things that really trouble you. You try to discover your basic sickness, and where you most need help. The priest is there to listen, to advise, to encourage, to support and to absolve. You and the priest try to listen to each other.

The priest then suggests an act of penance: a prayer, an act of self-denial or especially a service to others. This is a help for you to overcome weakness, live more generously and realize more clearly that the sinfulness harms others.

Prayer of Sorrow

You then express sorrow in prayer. Some suitable prayers are suggested below or you may use your own words.

1. My God I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend with your help, to do penance, to sine no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus suffered and died for us. In his name, my God have mercy.

2. Lord Jesus, you chose to be called the friend of sinners. By your saving death and resurrection free me from my sins. May your peace take root in my heart and bring forth a harvest of love, holiness and truth.