

Preparing for a Good Confession

Why do we confess our sins to a priest? - Confessing our sins helps us take responsibility for our actions. Only God forgives sin but the priest acts as God's minister by listening to our confession, giving us penance and encouraging us to avoid sin in the future. The priest may never tell anyone what he hears in the confessional. (Catechism #[1455](#), [1456](#), [1457](#))

What does the Sacrament of Reconciliation do for us? – Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are reconciled or brought back together with God. We are reconciled with our own conscience, allowing us to feel inner peace. We are reconciled with others especially those whom we have hurt. We are reconciled with the Christian community making the whole Church stronger. We are reconciled with all God's creation. (Catechism #[1469](#))

How to Go to Confession - Prepare to go to confession with a careful examination of conscience. Recall the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church and the duties of the particular state in life. Silent reflection should be accompanied by prayer especially to the Holy Spirit and Scripture reading. After you have thought about your sins and made a firm commitment asking for God's help not to sin again, enter the Confessional.

“Those who approach the sacrament of Reconciliation obtain pardon from the mercy of God for the offense committed against Him and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, example and prayer seeks their conversion.” ([Dogmatic Constitution on the Church #11](#))

Examination of Conscience (taken from Celebrating Our Faith Reconciliation)

1. Look at your life. Compare your actions and choices with the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, and the precepts of the Church.
2. Ask yourself:
 - When have I not done what God wants me to do?
 - Who have I hurt?
 - What have I done that I knew was wrong?
 - What have I not done that I should have done?
 - Are there serious sins I did not mention the last time I confessed?
 - Have I done penance? Have I tried as hard as I could to make up for the past sins?
 - Have I changed my bad habits?
 - Am I sincerely sorry for all my sins?
3. In addition to confessing your sins, you may want to talk to the priest about one or more of the above questions.
4. Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to change and start over.

Prayer Before Confession

Come Holy Spirit into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess and grant me your grace to confess them fully, humbly and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again. O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, intercede for me through the Passion of Your Son, that I may obtain the grace to make a good confession. All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a sinner that I may repent from my sins and that my heart may be forever united with yours in eternal love. Amen.

Rite of Reconciliation

Priest – In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Penitent – ***Amen***

Penitent – ***Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been*** (how long?) ***since my last confession and these are my sins:*** (confess your sins)

Priest – (gives you a penance)

Penitent – (pray the Act of Contrition) ***O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.***

Priest – (gives you absolution)

Priest – Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.

Penitent – ***For His mercy endures forever.***

The priest dismisses the penitent in the Peace of Christ

The Penitent should recite or do your penance as soon as possible.