

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

WHAT?

The way we embrace Christ's call to **conversion**.

The step we take to express true **repentance** for our offenses.

The **confession** of our sins.

The reception of **God's pardon and peace**.

The **restoration** of our relationship with God and with the Church.

After Jesus declared that Peter would be the rock upon which he would build his Church, he said to Peter, "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

(Mt 16:13-20)



After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, extended his peace, breathed the holy Spirit on them, and sent them out saying, "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

(Jn 20:19-23)

WHY?

We were born with the effects of **original sin**: disobedience toward God and a lack of trust in his goodness (Gen 3:1-11).

God the Father sent his Son, **Jesus Christ**, to save us from our sins (Jn 3:16).

Jesus accomplished his saving mission by establishing the **Kingdom of God** and by suffering, dying on the cross, rising from the dead, and ascending into heaven (Mt 5:17).

Jesus established the **Church** to continue his saving mission by the power of the Holy Spirit through the celebration of the sacraments (Mk 1:15, Jn 19:34, Acts 2: 1-4, 2 Cor 5:18).

Through **faith** in the Gospel and **Baptism**, we are first washed clean of all sin (Acts 2:38).

Through the **Sacrament of Penance**, we continue to experience the forgiveness of our sins (Mt 16:13-20, Jn 20:19-23).

HOW?

THE *ORDER OF PENANCE*

The Church celebrates the Sacrament of Penance using the *Order of Penance*.

The revised rites and formulas of the *Order of Penance* of the Second Vatican Council were promulgated in 1973. A new translation was provided in 2023.

Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance or **“going to confession”** is a liturgical action that consists of:

1. The Reception of the Penitent
2. The Reading of the Word of God (Optional)
3. The Confession of Sins and The Acceptance of Satisfaction
4. The Prayer of the Penitent and The Absolution
5. The Proclamation of Praise of God and The Dismissal of the Penitent

THE ACTS OF THE PENITENT

1. Contrition (sorrow for sin)
2. Confession (inward examination, outward accusation)
3. Satisfaction (an act of penance)

"Penance requires . . . the sinner to endure all things willingly, be contrite of heart, confess with the lips, and practice complete humility and fruitful satisfaction."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1450)



Going to Confession in Twelve Easy Steps

1. **Examine your conscience, call to mind your sins, and then enter the confessional.**
2. The priest will welcome and receive you.
3. **Make the sign of the cross and say:** "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
4. The priest will invite you to trust in God. He may also read a text of Sacred Scripture.
5. **Say these or similar words:**
"Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been _____long since my last confession. These are my sins..."
6. **Tell the priest your sins. Then say these or similar words:** "For these and all of my sins, I am sorry."
7. **Accept your work of penance (prayers, act of kindness, etc.) to help make satisfaction and amend your life.**
8. **Express your sorrow for your sins (Act of Contrition) in these or similar words:**
"O my God, I am sorry and repent with all my heart for all the wrong I have done
and for the good I have failed to do,
because by sinning I have offended you,
who are all good and worthy to be loved above all things.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid the occasions of sin.
Through the merits of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ, Lord, have mercy."
9. **Receive God's forgiveness as the priest prays the Prayer of Absolution.**
10. **At the end of the Prayer of Absolution, reply:** "Amen."
11. **Give praise to God. When the priest says:** "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,"
conclude: "For his mercy endures forever."
12. **Go in peace and remember to say or do your penance.**



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