

HOW TO CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Examine your conscience.

Put yourself before Jesus, compassionate and good, and open your soul completely to him. Ask that he send the Holy Spirit to restore your relationship completely with him.

Reflect on your relationship with God (prayer, participation at Mass, reverence, devotion, growth in holiness), your relationship with your family (faithfulness, generosity, self-sacrifice, being a model, personal support, presence to all, and sexual uprightness), your friends (integrity, charity, availability, appropriate boundaries), your workplace (honesty, attentiveness, cooperation, mutual support, lack of backbiting and gossip), your society (responsibility, serving the common good, openness to the needs of others, obedience of all good laws, protection of the weak, respect for the environment).

Make a resolution before Jesus that you will commit yourself to overcoming your failings with his help, as well as the tendencies behind them, as part of finding peace and reconciliation.

Enter the confessional or place where Reconciliation is celebrated.

Usually, this is arranged so you may kneel or sit, either speaking directly to the confessor or maintaining anonymity. Do what is comfortable.

Say: *Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been (how long) since my last confession. These are my sins.*

Confess your sins simply, without unnecessary elaboration, with openness and trust. If your sin is serious, mention the number of times you have committed it; otherwise describe the frequency in general ways (i.e., many times, daily, twice a month, etc.). Remember the point is not your shame, or your memory, but the healing that Jesus offers.

Listen to any advice the confessor offers. Clarify things if necessary. Remember that the confessor is present to help. Accept any follow-up actions the confessor gives; prayers, actions, changes in routine. (These are often called “the penance,” although they are more like remedies.)

Then say this prayer: *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 sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.*

Listen as the confessor says the prayer of absolution, assuring you of God’s mercy and forgiveness. When the prayer is nearly over, the confessor will make the sign of the cross, and you should also make that sign as a response.

When the confessor says, “Go now in peace,” you respond: *Thanks be to God.*



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