

Guide to Confession

(The Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents)

THE RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

Greeting of the Priest & Sign of the Cross

Invitation to Trust by the Priest: May God, who has shone his light in our hearts grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy.

Penitent: Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

Begin by mentioning your *state in life* (single, married, civilly divorced, etc.) and how long it has been since your last confession. Then confess your sins. Be sure to confess all known mortal sins in *kind* (the specific sin) and *number* (how many times, or an approximation if you don't know the exact number). True sorrow involves a *firm purpose of amendment*, meaning that you turn away from the sin and will try your best with God's help not to commit it again. This is necessary to receive absolution. We encourage all to review a separate *Examination of Conscience* to help you make a good and thorough confession. We have pamphlets for this on a back table in the lower church. After you confess your sins, the priest will offer a few words of encouragement or counsel. He might also ask a few clarifying questions to make sure your confession is complete. Then he will give you your *penance* to fulfill after the confession. Lastly, he will invite you to make your *Act of Contrition*.

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT AND THE ABSOLUTION

Act of Contrition: 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.

(other options on the other side of this sheet)

The priest will then offer you Absolution, at the end of which you say, "Amen." After that, there are a few options the priest can use to conclude. He might offer a proclamation of praise, saying "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good," to which you respond, "For his mercy endures forever," after which the priest will dismiss you, saying, "The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace." Or he might use another form of dismissal, in which case you simply respond, "Amen".

Other Options for the Prayer of the Penitent (Act of Contrition)

2. Remember, Lord, the compassion and mercy you showed long ago. Do not recall my sins and failings. In your mercy remember me, Lord, because of your goodness. (*Ps 25 [24]:6-7*)
3. Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. I acknowledge my offense; my sin is before me always. (*Ps 51 [50]:4-5*)
4. Father, I have sinned against you and I am not worthy to be called your son. Be merciful to me, a sinner. (*Lk 15:18; 18:13*)
5. O God, most merciful Father, like the Prodigal Son, I turn to you and say: I have sinned against you; I am no longer worthy to be called your child. O Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, like the thief to whom you opened the gates of paradise, I beg you: Lord, remember me in your Kingdom. O Holy Spirit, fount of love, with trust I call upon you: Purify me; make me walk as a child of the light.
6. Lord Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind, healed the sick, forgave the sinful woman, and, after his denial, confirmed Peter in your love, hear my plea: forgive all my sins, renew me in your love, and grant that I may live in perfect communion with my brothers and sisters and so proclaim your salvation to all.
7. Lord Jesus, who chose to be called the friend of sinners, through the mystery of your Death and Resurrection, free me from my sins. May your peace grow strong in me, that I may bear the fruits of charity, justice, and truth.
8. Lord Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, who take away the sin of the world, through the grace of the Holy Spirit be pleased to reconcile me with your Father; cleanse me in your Blood from every fault and make me fully alive to the praise of your glory.
9. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love; turn your face from my sins and blot out all my guilt; create a pure heart in me, O God, renew an upright spirit deep within me.
10. Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
11. O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

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