

THE SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

HOW TO CELEBRATE IT



WELCOME

The priest will welcome you to the celebration of the sacrament.

You will make the Sign of the Cross together:

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

The priest will invite you to place your trust in God in words such as:

May the Lord be in your heart

and help you to know true sorrow for your sins and ask forgiveness of God our Father.

Tell the priest how long it is since you last came to Reconciliation.

If this is your first or second time of making confession,



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LISTEN to the WORD of GOD

When we celebrate this sacrament of reconciliation it is helpful to listen to the Scriptures, and be reminded of the love that God has for us — especially when we most need it.

You might have some favourite Bible stories that will remind you of this — perhaps the story of the Prodigal Son,

or the story of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears.



LISTEN to the WORD of GOD



If not, you might like to read and think about the following story that Jesus told to help people know about the Father's love:

Jesus said: Who among you, if they had a hundred sheep, but then lost one, would not leave the ninety nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it.

And when he found it would he not joyfully carry it home on his shoulders, and then call together his friends and neighbours?

'Rejoice with me,' he would say.

'I have found my sheep that was lost.

*In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who says sorry and wants to do better than over ninety-nine good people who have no need to say sorry.
(Luke 15.4-7)*

If you read your passage before coming to Reconciliation, be ready to tell the priest something about what you liked in what you read.

REMEMBER and CONFESS

The priest will then invite you to confess your sins.

Do not worry if, having prepared, you find you forget things or your mind goes blank.

The priest will be ready to help you.

The priest will also reflect with you on the things you speak of, helping you to understand where you might be able to do things differently, where you need to ask God for help.

He will also offer you an act of penance, a way of showing how you wish to live a better life.

This act of penance might be a prayer, doing without some good thing for a little while, or might be doing something special to help someone else.



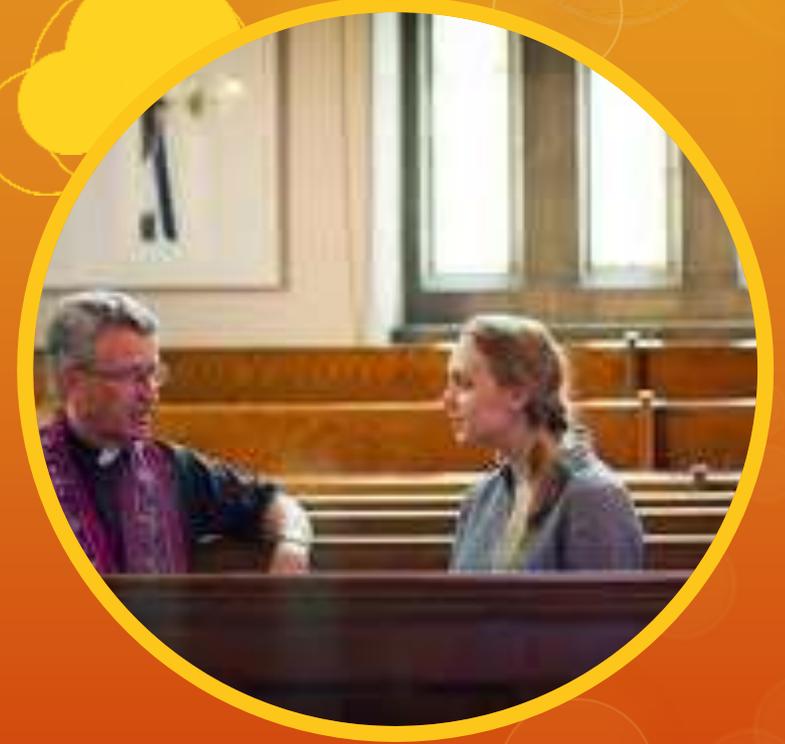
Prayer of Sorrow

The priest will then invite you to make your prayer of sorrow.

You may already know such a prayer.

Otherwise this is one of the prayers the Church recommends.

**Lord Jesus, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.**



ABSOLUTION



The priest will then extend his hands over your head and say the words of Absolution.

In this way you receive God's forgiveness of your sins.

The priest also prays for you that you will receive God's gifts of pardon and peace.

At the end of the priest's prayer you should say: **Amen**

After the Absolution the priest will speak bringing the celebration to an end in words such as:

Go in peace

*and proclaim to the world
the wonderful works of God,
who shares with you his life.*

You can respond by saying:

Amen or Thanks be to God.

REFLECTING TOGETHER

What do you notice about this celebration of the sacrament?

What actions, words or prayers do you find helpful?

What do you find less helpful?

THE SACRED SPACE

The place where this sacrament is celebrated should create an environment which is:

Prayerful

Friendly

Accessible

Safe



OPTIONS



CONFESSIONAL BOX

Penitents can stay behind a screen

Or

Sit with the priest in an open space

OPTIONS

THE SPACE SHOULD BE
INTENTIONALLY SET ASIDE

Where there is a focus for
prayer

E.g.,

A Cross

Icons

A table with a bible



A Call to rediscover



A rediscovery of Christ:
the one in whom God
shows us
his compassionate heart
and
reconciles us
fully with himself.

