



The Rite of Reconciliation

The Communal Celebration

1. We gather with our parish community. We join in singing a hymn. The priest greets us and leads us in praying together.
2. We listen to the Bible. We may hear more than one reading, with a psalm response in between. We stand for the Gospel reading. Then we listen to the priest or deacon talk about the readings. He helps us understand what we heard in Scripture.
3. We make an examination of conscience. We think of things we have done that we are sorry for. We pray together to tell God we are sorry. Then we pray the Lord's Prayer together.
4. We wait to take our turn confessing our sins. While we wait, we can sing or pray. When it is my turn, I confess my sins. The priest gives me my penance and absolves me from my sins. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
5. When everyone has confessed individually, we pray and sing in thanksgiving to God. The priest or deacon blesses us. We go in peace.
6. I do my penance as soon as possible.

The Individual Celebration

1. I take time to examine my conscience. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me remember what I have done or not done to follow God's Law. I think about the words of Jesus ("Love one another"), the Ten Commandments, and the Golden Rule.
2. The priest welcomes me. We make the Sign of the Cross together.
3. We read the Bible, the Word of God. The priest may ask me to read.
4. I confess my sins to the priest. He may give me some words of advice or encouragement. Then he gives me my penance.
5. The priest invites me to pray an Act of Contrition. In my prayer, I tell God that I am sorry for what I have done wrong and that I will try not to do these things again.
6. The priest extends his hand or hands over me and gives me absolution in the name of Jesus. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
7. We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends me forth in peace. I do my penance as soon as possible. I quietly thank Jesus for giving me his new life of grace and a new start.

Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often. It will help you to follow Jesus. The Church wants us to receive this sacrament at least once a year. Those who have committed a mortal sin must confess their sins and receive absolution before receiving Holy Communion.



An Examination of Conscience

Think about the words of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind what you have done, or what you have not done, to follow God's Law.

A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Ask Yourself

- Have I used God's name and the name of Jesus with respect?
- Have I honored God by saying my prayers?
- Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and to pray and sing with my parish?
- Have I shown love to my parents and others who care for me by listening to them and always doing as they ask?
- Have I lied to my parents or my teachers?
- Have I been helpful to my brothers and sisters? Have I been mean to them?
- Have I treated others in a kind and friendly way, or have I been mean to others?
- Have I played fairly?
- Did I call names or tell lies about someone?
- Did I share my things with others?
- Have I treated the belongings of others carefully? Have I taken what does not belong to me?



Reconciliation Key Words

A

absolution God's forgiveness of our sins through the words and actions of the priest

accident something done by mistake, or an action with unintended results; an unplanned event

Act of Contrition the prayer we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins and our promise not to sin in the future

C

confession another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; telling our sins to the priest during the Sacrament of Reconciliation

conscience the knowledge of right and wrong that we have within us

contrition true sorrow for our sins and a desire to avoid sin in the future

conversion changing for the better; turning our lives back to God

D

disciple someone who follows the instructions of a teacher; a close follower of Jesus

E

examination of conscience thinking about our actions, any sins we may have committed, and how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments and been better followers of Jesus' way of love

F

forgive to give up resentment or anger toward someone who has caused harm, restoring friendship and love

G

grace the free gift of God's own life in us, which makes us his children

Greatest Commandment the most important commandment, the commandment to love God and others, given to us by Jesus (see Mark 12:28–31)

M

mercy the loving kindness of God to all his children; the love and forgiveness we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

mortal sin a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God

P

peace an inner feeling of calm or quiet; peace is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

penance a prayer or good action to show that we will do better

S

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation the sacrament in which God forgives our sins and brings us back together with him and with the Church

sacraments seven holy signs that Jesus gave the Church, which give us a share in God's life. The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

Sacred Scripture the Word of God; another name for the Bible

sin something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law. When we sin we offend God and hurt our relationship with him.

T

Ten Commandments the ten important rules God gave to Moses and to us, to keep us safe and happy

V

venial sin a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God

Acknowledgments

The scriptural quotations in this guide are from the *Good News Translation*® (*Today's English Version, Second Edition*). Copyright © 1992 by the American Bible Society. All rights reserved. Bible text from the *Good News Translation (GNT)* is not to be reproduced in copies or otherwise by any means except as permitted in writing by the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023 (www.americanbible.org).

The first quotation on page 16 is from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL) (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), page 529. Copyright © 2011, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission of the ICEL. Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The second quotation on page 16 and the quotations on page 44, from *Rite of Penance* © 1974, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), numbers 46 and 47, are found in *The Rites of Penance*, volume one, prepared by the ICEL, a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990). Copyright © 1990 by the Order of St. Benedict, Collegeville, MN. Used with permission of the ICEL. Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The quotation on page 28 is from *Summa Theologiae* I-II, question 94, found at www.newadvent.org/summa/2094.htm.

"A Prayer to the Holy Spirit" on page 52 is taken from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1989), page 157. Copyright © 1989 by the USCCB. All rights reserved.

To view copyright terms and conditions for Internet materials cited here, log on to the home pages for the referenced websites.

During this book's preparation, all citations, facts, figures, names, addresses, telephone numbers, Internet URLs, and other pieces of information cited within were verified for accuracy. The authors and Saint Mary's Press staff have made every attempt to reference current and valid sources, but we cannot guarantee the content of any source, and we are not responsible for any changes that may have occurred since our verification. If you find an error in, or have a question or concern about, any of the information or sources listed within, please contact Saint Mary's Press.