



Reconciliation

- 1** The priest welcomes you to the Sacrament of Penance. You begin by making the sign of the cross.
- You say: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- 2** The priest invites you to have trust in God, and may read a passage from the Scriptures which proclaims God's mercy and calls us to conversion.
- Listen to these words attentively as you ready your heart and mind for your confession.

3 After reflecting on your circumstances, you confess your sins and seek reconciliation with God.

Be honest and direct when confessing your sins. The priest will then propose an act of penance to make amends for your sins and begin healing in your life.

4 The priest asks you to express your sorrow to God through a prayer. You may use these or similar words:

"Lord God,
in your goodness have mercy on me:
do not look on my sins,
but take away all my guilt.
Create in me a clean heart
and renew within me an upright spirit."



Reconciliation

5 Then the priest extends his hands over your head and prays the prayer of absolution:

God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

You respond:
"Amen."

6 The rite concludes with a short dialogue of praise and thanksgiving to God.

The priest says:
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

You respond:
"His mercy endures for ever."

Then the priest sends you forth, saying:
The Lord has freed you from your sins.
Go in peace.

You respond:
"Thanks be to God."

An Examination

Before Reconciliation, please take some time to reflect on your life. Some of these questions may help you do that...

My Relationship With God...

- What makes it most evident that I love God?
- Do people around me know I am a Christian?
- Do I come to God in prayer only when I need something?
- Do I try to talk to God on a regular basis?
- Do I thank God for the gifts in my life, or do I take God's love for granted?
- Do I consider God's plan for me when I make decisions about my life?
- Am I careless in the way I use God's name?
- Does my life reflect the goodness of God?
- Have I made a good effort to get to Mass every Sunday?

My Relationship With Myself...

- Do I love and respect myself as a gift of God?
- Do I take care of my body? Or do I treat it badly?
- Do I abuse my body with alcohol or drugs?
- What are my attitudes to sex? How do I treat the gift of my own sexuality? Is my attitude to sexual behaviour based on self-satisfaction?
- Do I use the incredible gift of my mind to the fullest?
- Am I learning to develop it, or am I wasting it?
- Am I thoughtful about the kind of entertainment I seek out? Do the things I read, watch and listen to help me grow in wisdom?
- Am I compassionate and loving towards myself?
- Or do my thoughts demean and hurt?
- Do my thoughts and choices really reflect who I am and who I want to be?

Of Conscience

My Relationship with Others...

Do I respect my family members? Do I take their love for granted? Do I thank them regularly and tell them that I love them? When we disagree, do I try to communicate my point of view in a respectful way, and listen openly to theirs? Do I ignore them? Talk down to them? Do I criticise more than praise them?

Do I respect the personal rights and the property of others? Do I allow others the freedom to be themselves? What kind of an example am I to my friends or those who I work with? Do I live out the values of respect, compassion, faith and integrity?

Am I using anybody for my own gain?
Do I think myself better than others?
Do I make hasty judgements about people?
Am I willing to listen to and participate in gossip?
Have I criticised someone unjustly?
Do I say unkind things about others behind their back?

Shorter Examination Questions...

Are there people I fail to love the way God wants me to?

When have I wronged another, drifted away from God, or lost my way?

Am I open to reconciliation? Do I truly seek forgiveness?

What is the one thing that most separates me from God right now?