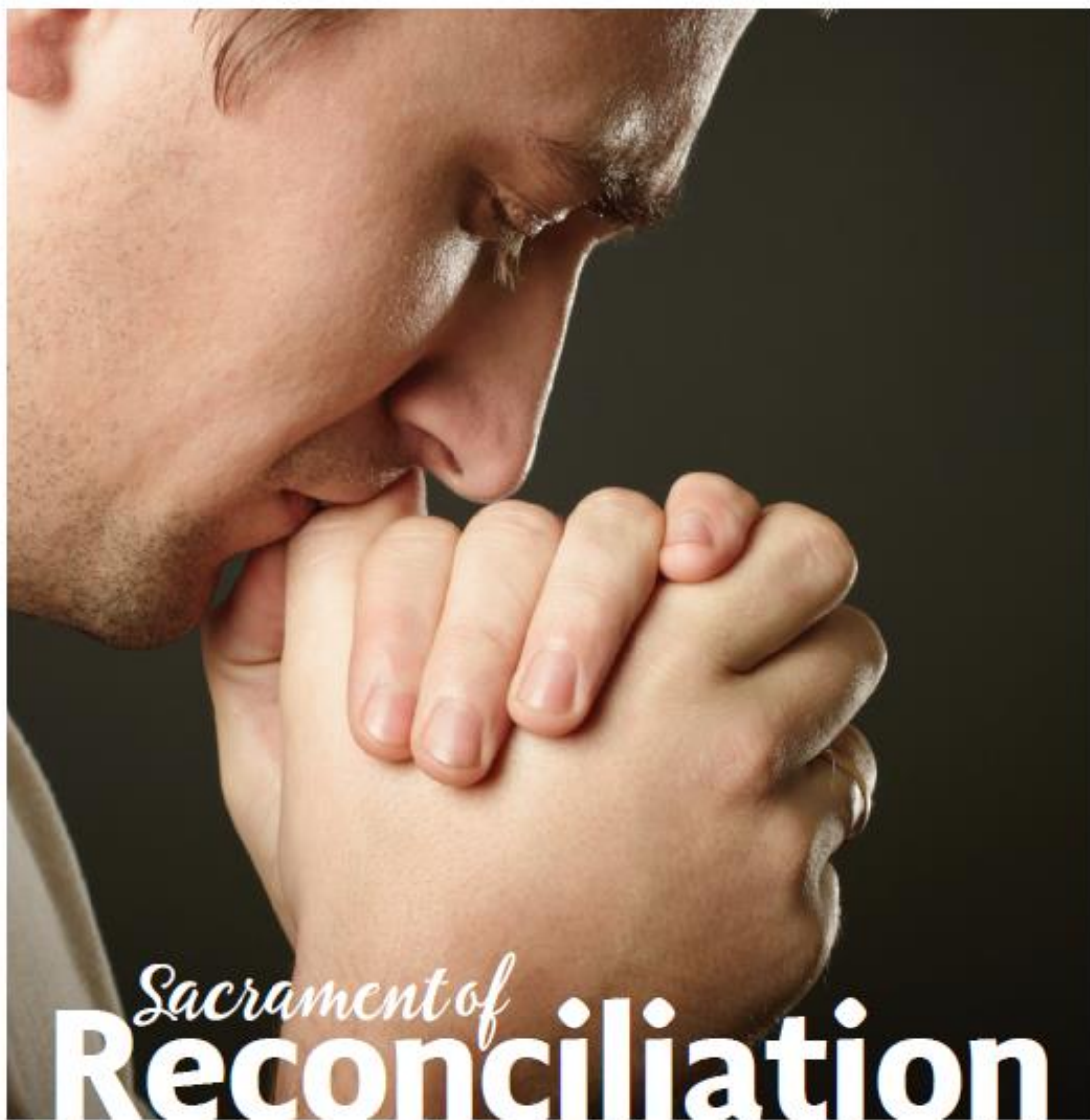


A SHORT GUIDE



Sacrament of **Reconciliation**

"When faced with the gravity of sin,
God responds with the fullness of
mercy. Mercy will always be greater
than any sin, and no one can place
limits on the love of God who is ever
ready to forgive."

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 3)



Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Lent

The Light is ON for you



What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation (officially called the Sacrament of Penance, and also known as Confession) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in his love and mercy to offer us forgiveness for the times we have sinned and turned away from God. At the same time, we are reconciled with the Church because it is also wounded by our sins.

Every time we sin, we hurt ourselves, other people and God. In Reconciliation, we acknowledge our sins before God and the Church. We express our sorrow in a meaningful way, receive the forgiveness of Christ and his Church, make reparation for what we have done, and resolve to do better in the future.

How to Prepare for Reconciliation

We should begin with **prayer**, placing ourselves in the presence of our loving God.

We then review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love God and one another. This is called an **examination of conscience**.

Following the examination of conscience, tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins, and make a firm resolution not to sin again.

The forgiveness of sins involves four parts:

- + **Contrition:** A sincere sorrow for having offended God, and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.
- + **Confession:** Confronting our sins in a profound way to God by speaking them aloud to the priest.
- + **Penance:** An important part of our healing is the penance the priest gives us in reparation for our sins.
- + **Absolution:** The priest speaks the words by which we are reconciled to God and are absolved from our sins.

Examination of Conscience

My Relationship with God

- + Have I taken steps to help me grow closer to God?
- + Have I made myself present to God at Mass and in my daily activities?
- + Is there a place in my life for prayer and for getting to know Jesus by reading the Good News in the Bible?
- + Do I turn to God, Mary, and the Saints with love and reverence?

Myself

- + Have I shown love and respect for myself as God's good creation?

My Relationship with Family, Friends, and Neighbours

- + Have I set a good example through my words or actions? Do I treat others fairly? Do I speak of others with kindness and generosity? Am I judgemental or compassionate?
- + Do I show love, respect, and fidelity to those I love? How have I reached out to those around me - my family, neighbours, friends, the poor and the marginalised?
- + Do I insist in getting my own way or am I open to listening to and working with others, even those who do not think like me? Do I see they have equal dignity to me?
- + How have I uplifted others and affirmed they are God's good creation?
- + Is there room for forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation in my life?
- + Do I show care and respect for all of creation including animals, their habitats, and the ecosystems of our world? What can I do to promote sustainable living?
- + Have I taken or damaged anything that did not belong to me? Was I envious of someone else? Have I cheated or lied?
- + Do I promote and support life in all its stages?



Rite of Reconciliation – What to do

1. Priest gives a blessing or greeting.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross and say *"Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was..."* (give weeks, months, years).
3. Confess all your sins to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, the priest will guide you.)
4. The priest assigns a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
5. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins (example on following page)
6. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned
against you, because you are so good, and with
your help I will not sin again.

Amen.

"... 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."

Hear these words again, spoken directly to you, and rejoice!



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BROKEN BAY

To find a Catholic Church near you, visit www.bbcatholic.org.au

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Adapted from resources by the Archdiocese of Washington