Rite of Reconciliation

1. The priest greets you.

2. After making the Sign of the Cross, you may share some basic information about your life [e.g. give the number of weeks, months, or years since your last confession]. Then the Word of God may be proclaimed.

3. Confess all of your sins to the priest. He will help you to make a good confession. If you are unsure about how to confess or you feel uneasy, just ask him to help you. Place your trust in God’s mercy and forgiveness.

4. Following your confession of sins, you may say, “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”

5. The priest assigns you a penance and offers advice to help you be a better disciple of Christ.

6. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

7. Finally, you and the priest give thanks and praise to God for his mercy; and then, you are sent in peace.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Amen.

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“The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

-Philippians 4:6-7
What is Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Confession) is the sacrament through which the love and mercy of Jesus Christ is offered to us.

In this sacrament, we confess our sins, express our sorrow in a meaningful way, receive the forgiveness of Christ, make amends, and resolve to do better in the future.

The forgiveness of sins involves:

- **Contrition**: A sincere sorrow for having sinned against God and others. It is an essential element since there can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our past wrongs.

- **Confession**: Confronting our sins in a profound way by speaking about them out loud to the priest.

- **Penance**: An important part of our conversion and healing is changing our lives. The priest asks us to make amends for our sins through prayer and action.

- **Absolution**: After asking for forgiveness, the priest frees us of our sins by saying: “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Preparing to Make a Good Confession

Confession may seem difficult, but it does not have to be! A little preparation goes a long way.

Before you go to Confession, it is good to begin with prayer, asking God for the courage to be honest with yourself as you review past thoughts, words and actions. This is called an “examination of conscience.” As you seek healing and forgiveness, it is important to express sorrow for the wrongs you have done and resolve to sin no more.

An examination of conscience always involves recalling how we did not love God and others – in our thoughts, in our words, in what we have done, and in what we have failed to do.

Four steps to make an examination of conscience:

- Begin with a prayer asking for God’s help.
- Review your life. To help you do this, ask yourself some questions based on the Ten Commandments (see next panel).
- Tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins.
- Make a firm resolution not to sin again.

Examination of Conscience

Recall your sins. Prayerfully consider what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God and your brothers and sisters in Christ. Ask yourself:

- Do I pray to God every day? Have I thanked God for his gifts to me?
- Did I put my faith in danger or engage in superstitious practices?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I curse or take a false oath?
- Did I miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation through my own fault? Am I attentive at Mass?
- Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Was I disrespectful? Did I gossip?
- Did I get drunk? Did I take illicit drugs?
- Did I consent to, recommend, advise, or actively take part in an abortion?
- Did I willfully look at pornography or engage in impure conversations or actions? Did I use artificial means to prevent conception?
- Was I unfaithful to my spouse? Did I engage in sexual activity outside of marriage?
- Did I steal or damage another’s property? Have I been honest and just in my business relations?
- Have I been responsive to the needs of the poor and respected the dignity of others?
- Have I shared my wealth with others?
- Did I tell lies? Did I sin by detraction of others?
- Did I judge others rashly in serious matters?
- Have I envied others?