

Coming Together

The priest will welcome you as you come into the reconciliation chapel.

Most people find it more helpful to sit where they can see the priest so as to speak with him more naturally. Normally there will be the option of kneeling behind a screen should you prefer that.

Make the 'Sign of the Cross' together with the priest.

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

It is often helpful - if the priest does not know you - to briefly introduce yourself to him. This is simply to let him know something about your circumstances in life. For example, letting him know if you are married or single; a parent or not; working or unemployed; whether you are in good health or suffering from serious illness. You might also mention how long it is since you last celebrated this sacrament.

Listening to God speaking in the Scriptures

The Church encourages us to prepare for this sacrament by reading and praying with a scripture passage

There are many classic passages you might use - but it can be a helpful thing to make use of a reading from last Sunday's Mass. The scriptures are our food for the week - using them in prayer again and again, is one of the ways in which we can deepen our awareness of the riches they contain.

If you have prepared using a scripture passage mention this to the priest, and perhaps read him a line or two that has struck you from your chosen scripture passage. If you do not read from a passage of your choice the priest will invite you to hear a passage of the scriptures that he chooses.

The priest will then invite you to place your trust in God's love and mercy and to confess any sins that you wish to place before God.



Confessing sins, repenting, and asking for forgiveness

Mention to the priest the things that are on your conscience and for which you ask forgiveness from God and the Church.

If you forget what you want to mention do not worry. The priest is there to help you with your confession.

Often, after your confession, the priest will have a brief conversation with you, trying to explore how best you move on from where you are, so as to grow stronger in God's grace and mercy.

The priest will offer you a penance - something that will show your desire to reject sin and turn to what is good. Sometimes this will take the form of a prayer, sometimes it may take a more practical form.

The priest will then invite you to say a prayer, expressing your sorrow for sin.

This may take many forms. Two are given here.

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

or

**God our Father,
I thank you for loving me.
I am sorry for all my sins,
for what I have done
and for what I have failed to do.**

**I will sincerely try to love you and others
in everything I do and say.
Help me to walk in your light today and always.**

Praying God's forgiveness

The priest will extend his hands over your head, or at least extend his right hand towards you.

He will then say the prayer of absolution, praying for God's forgiveness and praying that you will have the peace of Christ in your heart.

**God the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the for-
giveness 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.**

*At the end of the priest's prayer, you make this prayer your own by saying: **Amen.***

Giving thanks to God

After the absolution the priest will speak briefly of God's love and mercy.

For example:

**The Lord has freed you from sin.
May he bring you safely
to his kingdom in heaven.
Glory to him for ever.**

*You respond: **Amen***

The priest will then invite you to: **'Go in the peace of Christ'.**

*You should respond: **Thanks be to God.***

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Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance



Introduction

Perhaps it has been a while since you last celebrated this sacrament of God's mercy. If that is the case you may find this leaflet a helpful reminder of how we celebrate this sacrament of forgiveness and healing and of some of the prayers we use.

You may also find the leaflet helpful if you celebrate the sacrament regularly. It can remind of why we do what we do, and help us better understand what we take part in and what God offers us through this simple pattern of words and actions.

God calls us all to be made new in him that we might live in him, here and now, set free from the mess and the hurt of sin. The pre-eminent sacrament of reconciliation is the sacrament of the Eucharist. In that sacrament Jesus feeds us with his Body and Blood so that we might enjoy Communion with him. But this sacrament of Penance is also a necessary part of our spiritual life, a way of attending more directly to the particular things which mark and mar our lives. To these things God brings his compassion and healing, to restore us to the fullness of life.