

## How to "GO" to Confession

The forgiveness of sins involves four parts:

**Contrition:** a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the penitent. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow, and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.

**Confession:** confronting our sins in a profound way by speaking about them — aloud — to the priest.

**Penance:** an important part of our healing is the “penance” the priest imposes in reparation for our sins.

**Absolution:** the priest speaks the words by which “God, the Father of Mercies” reconciles a sinner to Himself through the merits of the Cross.

## Rite of Reconciliation of Individual Penitents (sometimes called Form 1)

The sacrament may be celebrated face-to-face or anonymously, with a screen between you and the priest. Choose the option that is the most comfortable for you.

1. The penitent (you) and the priest begin with the sign of the Cross, saying:

*"In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

2. The priest urges the penitent to have confidence in God with these or similar words:

*"May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow."*

3. The priest may read or say a passage from Sacred Scripture after which the penitent then states:

*"Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [tell him however many days, weeks, months or years] since my last confession."*

4. The penitent then states his or her sins.

For the confession to be valid, the penitent must confess all of the mortal sins he or she is aware of having committed since the last confession, be sorry for them, and have a firm purpose of amendment to try not to commit the same sins in the future.

5. After this, the priest will generally give some advice to the penitent and impose a penance.

6. Then he will ask the penitent to make an act of contrition. The penitent may do so in his or her own words, or may say one of many memorized acts of contrition like the following from the *Rite of Penance*:

## Act of Contrition

*"Lord Jesus, you chose to be called the friend of sinners. By your saving death and resurrection free me from my sins. May your peace take root in my heart and bring forth a harvest of love, holiness and truth."* (#90)

7. After this the priest will absolve the penitent in the following words:

*"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 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."*

8. The penitent makes the sign of the Cross and answers:

*"Amen."*

9. The priest will then dismiss the penitent with a short prayer and encouragement.

10. The penitent should then immediately try to fulfill the penance imposed if it is something that can be done quickly.



Roman Catholics believe that the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is a graced opportunity for us to celebrate God's forgiveness. The sacrament calls us to a true sorrow for the sins we have committed, along with an intention to repair our lives.

It is important to approach the sacrament of Reconciliation by taking some time for prayer and reflection on our lives. An examination of conscience is a tool to help us look at our lives and consider how we have been guilty of actions that separate us from God and from one another.

Ask God for the Holy Spirit's help to examine your conscience well by prayerfully reviewing your conduct in light of the commandments and the example of Christ. Tell the priest the specific kind of sins you have committed and, to the best of your ability, how many times you have committed them since your last good confession. Avoid generalizations and inform the priest of any relevant circumstances in which your sins were committed.



## Examining Your Conscience

Before celebrating the sacrament of Penance, each individual should reflect on these questions in particular:

1. What is my attitude toward the sacrament of Penance? Do I sincerely want to be set free from sin, to turn again to God, to begin a new life, and to enter into a deeper relationship with God?
2. Did I forget to mention, or deliberately conceal, any grave sins in past confessions?
3. Did I perform the penance I was given? Did I make reparation for any injury to others? Have I tried to put into practice my resolution to lead a better life in keeping with the Gospel?

Then, each individual should examine their life in the light of God's word, and Jesus' example.

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**For more information go to:**  
**<http://forgiven.dor.org>**



## Diocese of Rochester



To celebrate the Sacrament of Penance,  
contact your local parish priest.

To find a parish near you, go to: [www.dor.org](http://www.dor.org)  
parishes & mass times.