What Is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in his love and mercy to offer sinners forgiveness for offenses committed against God. At the same time, sinners reconcile 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 his 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.

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 to God 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.

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The Light is ON for You

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the story of God’s love that never turns away from us.

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Diocese of Davenport

To receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, contact your local parish priest.

To find a Catholic church near you, visit [http://www.davenportdiocese.org/](http://www.davenportdiocese.org/)


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Rite of Reconciliation

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, or years].”
3. Confess all of your sins to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.)
4. Say, “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”
5. The priest assigns a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
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.

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**Act of Contrition**

God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, do penance, and to amend my life.

Amen.

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**Recall your sins. Prayerfully ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God’s and the Church’s commandments.**

- Do I pray to God every day? Have I thanked God for his gifts to me?
- Did I put my faith in danger through readings contrary to Catholic teachings or involvement in non-Catholic sects? Did I engage in superstitious practices: palm reading or fortune-telling?
- 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 keep fast and abstinence on the prescribed days?
- Did I disobey my parents and lawful superiors in important matters?
- Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Was I disrespectful?
- 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, entertain impure thoughts, 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?
- Did I tell lies? Did I sin by calumny, or detraction, of others? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters?
- Have I envied other people?