

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Whether celebrated in a communal or in an individual form, the sacrament of reconciliation is an important way of renewing our baptismal promises.

**Dying to sin:** We express our hatred for sin and our intention to turn from sinful ways when we examine our conscience, pray for forgiveness and resolve to do better with God's help. In the celebration, our confession of sins, our prayer of sorrow, and our willingness to accept and perform an act of satisfaction (penance) are ways of reinforcing our death to the controlling power of sin. After our celebration, our serious efforts to change our life and to avoid occasions of sin are also part of our baptismal promise to die with Jesus to sin. Whenever we carry our cross with Christ, we are sharing in his saving death in order to share in his life-giving resurrection.

**Living for God:** We show we are ready to live with Christ for God when we promise to change our life with the grace of our Lord, when we listen with faith to the word of God, when we seek advice on how we can live a more Christ-like life. We offer our thanks and praise to our heavenly Father for reconciling us through the obedient dying and the rising of Jesus, and we promise to live and walk in love and service with Jesus our Lord.

**Many ways of reconciliation:** Our Catholic tradition teaches us that there are many other ways of seeking forgiveness: all are related to turning back to and renewing our baptismal promises, involving us in deeper love of God or neighbour, hatred for sin, and our efforts to do better. These ways include prayer, acts of kindness for others, almsgiving, forgiveness of others, penance, patience, acts of obedience or worship toward God.

## Some Reminders

These practices can help us to remember and renew our baptism:

*Sign of the cross.* At the beginning (and end) of our prayers, we bless ourselves with the sign of the cross. This action reminds us of our faith in the Trinity and in the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. We are called to be God's holy people through Jesus our Lord in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

*Blessed water:* We may take blessed water home from the Easter vigil or from the Sunday celebration and use it when we make the sign of the cross. In baptism we share in Jesus' dying and rising.

*Daily prayer:* We begin and end the day with Jesus by turning to our Father in heaven. We praise our God and ask for help to continue dying to sin and living with Jesus in love and service.

*We praise you, holy Father:  
you have made us your children,  
brothers and sisters of Jesus,  
and temples of your Holy Spirit.*

*We thank you for making us Christians.  
Help us to continue dying to sin  
and living with Christ for you.  
Lead all people into your kingdom of light.*

*Blessed are you, Lord our God,  
for ever and ever. Amen!*

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# RENEWING OUR BAPTISM

Basis of our Christian life

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## Our Baptism

When we are baptized, God does many things for us:

We become *adopted children* of God our Father. We become the Church, the royal and priestly people of God. We are called to be holy, to live blameless lives, to give God glory, to offer our worship to the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

We become *sisters and brothers* of Jesus and of one another. By baptism we share in his death and resurrection: with Jesus we die to sin and with him we rise to new life for God. Jesus is the vine, we are his living branches. He is the good shepherd and we are the flock for which he died. We are members of the body of Christ and he is our head.

We become *temples of God's Spirit*. The Holy Spirit gives us light and guidance. We are called to be holy people, men and women of prayer and love. We are sent by God to build up the kingdom by our daily living, by helping and serving others in love.

**God is with us:** God has chosen to live in our hearts through the life of grace poured out in us! Jesus tells us that the Father comes and lives in all who love God. Jesus is always with us. We are temples of the Spirit. Our God is not distant and remote, but is close to us.

**Our spiritual life:** Baptism is the basis of our spiritual life. In baptism we are called to live for God and each day we try to keep our baptismal promises to die to sin and to live for God. We might pause occasionally, even daily, to examine our conscience and ask how well we live up to these promises, how well we co-operate with God's life at work in us.

## Remembering Baptism

**Our baptismal day:** Sunday is the Lord's day, when we celebrate the dying and rising of Jesus, and our sharing in his victory through our baptism.

*Celebrating baptism.* The great day for baptism is the Easter vigil. During the rest of the year, we celebrate baptism on Sunday. This is the day we celebrate our Lord's victory over sin, evil and death. In baptism we share in Jesus' death and resurrection and in all his gifts of life to us.

*Renewing our covenant.* Each Sunday, we remember all God's gifts to us, and we give thanks to God our Father in the Eucharist. We promise once again that we will die with Christ to sin and live this week with him for our heavenly Father and in the grace of his Spirit.

*Remembering our baptism.* Our Father calls us together to give worship and glory in the Sunday Eucharist. We are God's beloved children by our baptism, and we have both the privilege and the responsibility of offering our praise and thanks to God in the liturgy and in our daily living.

The blessing and sprinkling of water at the beginning of Sunday Mass is meant to be a reminder and renewal of our baptism, as is the use of blessed water whenever we enter the church building.

**Baptismal font:** The baptismal font is also a reminder to all that we become members of the body of Christ through baptism. The place of baptism should be visible to all. Simple, beautiful and uncluttered, it stands as a reminder that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb of God: we are God's holy people in this community.

## During the Year

As well as on each Sunday, we are invited to renew our baptism during the liturgical year:

**Lent** is concerned with both baptism and penance. While catechumens are preparing for their baptism at Easter, the rest of us are getting ready to renew our baptismal promises. By Scripture reading, prayer, penance and good works, we try each day to overcome our faults and to live as God's holy people.

**Easter vigil:** At the end of Lent, during the celebration of the Easter Triduum, we renew our baptismal promises of rejecting evil, of dying with Christ to sin and of living with him for God. This is the meaning of being Christians at work in the world.

**Easter season:** From Easter to Pentecost, we join with the new members of the Church in thanking God for all the gifts we have received, and in using them to build the kingdom with Jesus. We continue to keep our baptismal promises in our daily living.

**Advent and Christmas:** We "make straight the way of the Lord" in our lives and prepare for his coming by living up to our baptismal promises, and by asking Jesus to help us to be faithful in loving and serving other people.

**Daily prayer:**

*Each morning,* we begin the new day with our risen Lord and join him in living for God's glory, in doing the Father's will and in making the kingdom more a reality.

*Each evening,* in union with the obedient death of Jesus, we thank God for helping us die to sin and ask for the grace to live with Christ in love.