

THE ORDER FOR RECONCILING INDIVIDUAL PENITENTS

The Sacrament typically takes place in a confessional. When a confessional is not available, arrangements should provide for the penitent to remain anonymous. The penitent prepares for the Sacrament with prayer and a thorough examination of conscience.

THE RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

When the penitent comes to confess his or her sins, the priest welcomes the penitent with kindness and greets him or her with friendly words. Then the penitent makes the sign of the cross, which the priest may make also, saying.

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

The priest invites the penitent to have trust in God, in these or similar words:

**May God, who has shone his light in our hearts
grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy.**

The penitent replies: Amen.

Other forms of the invitation to trust in God may be chosen from the ritual book.

THE READING OF THE WORD OF GOD (Optional)

Then the priest or penitent reads or recites from memory a text of Sacred Scripture in which God's mercy is announced and people are called to conversion. Texts for this purpose can be found in the ritual book.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

Next, the penitent confesses his or her sins, after first saying a general formula such as, I confess to Almighty God, or Forgive me, Father, or Bless me, Father. The penitent should also say how long it has been since the last confession and may mention his or her state in life. If necessary, the priest assists the penitent to make an integral confession, offers suitable counsel, and urges contrition for faults, reminding the penitent that through the Sacrament of Penance a Christian, by dying and rising with Christ, is renewed in the Paschal Mystery. Then the priest proposes a work of penance that the penitent accepts to make satisfaction for sin and to amend his or her life. The priest should also adapt to the penitent's circumstances in every way. It is helpful for the penitent to conclude the confession of sins by saying, I am sorry for these and all my sins.

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT AND THE ABSOLUTION

The priest then invites the penitent to express his or her contrition, which the penitent may do in these or similar words:

**O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments,
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 sin no more
and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.**

This is the preferred form of the Act of Contrition for schools and parish religious education programs in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Act of Contrition must be prayed in the context of the Sacrament. Other prayers of the penitent may be chosen from the ritual book.

Then the priest, extending his hands over the penitent's head (or at least extending his right hand) says:

**God, the Father of mercies,
through the Death and Resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God grant 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.**

The penitent replies: Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE OF GOD AND THE DISMISSAL OF THE PENITENT

After the absolution, the priest continues:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

The penitent concludes: His mercy endures for ever.

Then the priest dismisses the penitent who has been reconciled, saying:

The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace.

Other dismissals may be chosen from the ritual book.

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