

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE



INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Reception of the Penitent

The penitent may choose whether to remain anonymous behind a screen or to celebrate the rite face to face. The priest welcomes the penitent warmly and greets him/her with kindness. Together they make the sign of the cross.

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 enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy.

The penitent answers: **Amen.**

Reading of the Word of God

The penitent or priest may then read one of the following Scripture passages or another text which proclaims God's mercy or calls sinners to conversion.

From the Prophet Ezekiel (11:19-20)
The Lord says: I shall give them a single heart and I shall put a new spirit in them; I shall remove the heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh, so that they can keep my laws and respect my judgments and put them into practice. Then they shall be my people and I shall be their God.

From the Psalms (51:1-2, 10)
Have mercy on me, O god, in your faithful love, in your great tenderness wipe away my offences; wash me clean from my guilt, purify me from my sin.
God create in me a clean heart, renew within me a resolute spirit.

From Paul's letter to the Romans (7:15-18, 24-25)
I do not understand my own behaviour; I do not act as I mean to, but I do the things I hate. While I am acting as I do not want to, I still acknowledge the Law as good, so it is not myself acting, but the sin which lives in me... Though the will to do what is good is in me, the power to do it is not... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death? God - thanks be to him - through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (22: 36-38)
"Which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" Jesus said "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself".

From the Gospel according to Mark (1:15)
"The time has come," Jesus said, "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel

Confession of Sins

The penitent confesses his/her sins. The priest helps the penitent to make a good confession and offers suitable counsel. He reminds the penitent of Jesus' saving death and resurrection. Then the priest proposes an act of penance which the penitent accepts as a sign of inner conversion.

Prayer of the Penitent

The penitent says a prayer of sorrow in these or similar words:

**My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Saviour Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.**

or
**O my God, I am sorry
that I have sinned against you,
because you are so good,
and with your help
I will not sin again.**

or
**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Absolution

The priest extends his hand over the penitent's head and says
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.

The penitent answers: **Amen.**

Proclamation of Praise

The priest says:
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

The penitent answers:
His mercy endures for ever.

Or the priest and penitent may say Psalm 117 together:
**Praise the Lord, all you nations!
Give glory, all you peoples!
The Lord's love for us is strong;
the lord is faithful forever. Alleluia!**

Dismissal

The priest concludes in these or similar words:
The Lord has freed you from your sins.
Go in peace.

How to prepare for the Sacrament

PRAYER

A good way to begin preparing for the celebration of individual reconciliation is to take holy water and make the sign of the cross. This reminds us of our first conversion to Christ in baptism and our first participation in the saving death and resurrection of Christ.

Priest and penitent should prepare themselves to celebrate the sacrament above all by prayer. The penitent prays for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for the gift of God's forgiveness. The penitent may use his/her own words or may pray using set prayers such as the **Our Father** or the **I confess to almighty God** from the introductory rite of the Mass.

Then, in the context of prayer, some time should be spent in making an examination of conscience and in deepening our sorrow for sins.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

- *Love the Lord your God with all your heart.*
Is my heart really set on God or am I more concerned about the things of this world?
Am I prepared to stand up for my faith?
Do I try to understand my faith and listen to God's word?
How often do I pray to thank God or ask for help?
- Do I keep Sunday holy by taking an active part each week in the parish Mass?

■ *Love one another as I have loved you.*

- Do I contribute to the well-being and happiness of my family as a parent, spouse, son/daughter, brother/sister?
- Am I generous in giving my money and time to help others, especially those who are in need?
- Am I compromised by racism or discrimination of any kind? Have I contributed to the work of promoting justice, harmony, and right values?
- Am I fair and honest in my work?
- Have I hurt others by lying or speaking badly about them, by judging them rashly, or by holding grudges?
- Am I guilty of anger or violence towards another?
- Have I stolen or damaged the property of others? Do I care for the environment?

■ *Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

- Am I selfish or proud?
- How well do I control my vices and passions?
- Am I responsible in my use of food and drink?
- Has my use of sex shown respect for the human body?
- Has it always expressed a committed and faithful relationship of love?
- How well have I dealt with the sorrows, disappointments and difficulties of my life?

LITURGY GPO Box 282, Brisbane 4001
BRISBANE Ph 07 3336 9444. Fax 07 3221 1705
orders@liturgybrisbane.net.au www.liturgybrisbane.net.au
© Liturgy Brisbane 1999. Rite of Penance © 1974, 1975
International Commission on English in the Liturgy. All rights reserved.
New Jerusalem Bible © 1985 Darton Longman and Todd Ltd

