

# THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

*“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’”(John 20:21-23).*

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of Catholicism. Jesus Christ, in His abundant love and mercy, established the Sacrament of Confession, so that we as sinners can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church. The sacrament “washes us clean,” and renews us in Christ.

## THE RITE FOR RECONCILIATION OF INDIVIDUAL PENITENTS

*The following steps can be followed to make a good Confession:*

### RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

*The penitent enters the confessional or other place set aside for the celebration of the sacrament of penance. After the welcome of the priest, the penitent makes the sign of the cross saying:*

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

### READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

*The priest may read a text of Scripture which tells about God’s mercy and calls us to conversion.*

### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

*Catholics for centuries have found it profitable to examine their conscience in light of the Ten Commandments. Penitents are encouraged to expand on them in their prayerful review of their conduct.*

#### **FIRST COMMANDMENT**

***I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.***

- *Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?*
- *Have I made time for God each day in prayer? Have I tried to learn and understand my faith better?*
- *Am I whole-hearted in accepting and following God’s teaching or do I only pick and choose the convenient parts of His message?*

#### **SECOND COMMANDMENT**

***You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.***

- *Have my words, actively or passively put down God, the Church, or people?*
- *Do I try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions that I have made toward God, especially those of my Baptism and Confirmation?*

#### **THIRD COMMANDMENT**

***Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.***

- *Do I go to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation?*
- *Have I fully, consciously and actively participated in Holy Mass?*
- *Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?*

#### **FOURTH COMMANDMENT**

***Honor your father and your mother.***

- *Have I neglected my duties to my husband, wife, children, parents or siblings?*
- *Have I failed to be grateful for the sacrifices my parents made for me?*
- *When I have disciplined my children, did I do so with charity and prudence?*

### **FIFTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not kill.**

- *Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?*
- *Have I neglected my health?*
- *Did I give bad example through drug abuse, drinking alcohol to excess, fighting or quarrelling?*
- *Did I have an abortion, or encourage or help someone else to have one?*

### **SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not commit adultery.**

- *Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?*
- *Have I remembered that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?*
- *Have I been faithful to my husband or wife in my heart and in my conduct with others?*
- *Did I deliberately look at impure TV programs, computer sites, videos, pictures, or movies?*

### **SEVENTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not steal.**

- *Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or to keep stolen goods? Have I returned or made restitution for things I have stolen?*
- *Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?*
- *Did I damage others' property without acknowledging it and repairing it?*

### **EIGHTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

- *Did I lie? Have my lies caused spiritual or material harm to others?*
- *Have I gossiped, or embellished stories at the expense of another? Did I insult or tease with the intention of hurting others?*
- *Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?*

### **NINTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

- *Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?*
- *Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or desires?*

### **TENTH COMMANDMENT**

#### **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

- *Am I content with my own means and needs, or am I greedy or envious?*
- *Have I made acquiring material possessions the focus of my life?*
- *Am I inordinately attached to the things of this world? Do I generously share my goods with the needy?*

## **CONFESSION OF SINS AND ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION**

*The penitent speaks to the priest in a normal, conversational fashion telling the priest when he/she last celebrated the sacrament and then confesses his/her sins. The penitent then listens to any advice the priest may give and accepts the satisfaction from the priest.*

## **PRAYER OF THE PENITENT**

*Before the absolution is given, the penitent expresses sorrow for sins 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 Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.**

## **ABSOLUTION**

*The priest extends his hands (or at least extends his right hand) saying:*

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.

**R. Amen.**

## **PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE OF GOD AND DISMISSAL**

*Penitent and priest give praise to God:*

Priest: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Penitent: **His mercy endures forever.**

*Then the penitent is dismissed by the priest.*