



# The Light is ON for You

Celebrate this Lent the Sacrament of Reconciliation

“God never tires of forgiving us! The problem is that we ourselves tire; we do not want to ask; we grow weary of asking for forgiveness. Let us never tire...! God is the loving Father who always pardons, who has that heart of mercy for us all.”

*Pope Francis, 17th March 2013*

## What is Reconciliation?

When we sin, we hurt ourselves by wounding our relationships with God and our neighbour. In the Sacrament of reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance), God offers us the gift of forgiveness of sins. We accept and receive God's forgiveness by sincerely expressing our sorrow, by acknowledging and making reparation for our sins, and by resolving to do better in the future.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has **four** parts:

✚ **Contrition:** A sincere sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the person confessing. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.

✚ **Confession:** Naming our sins - aloud - to the priest, who represents Christ and his Church.

✚ **Penance:** The prayers - our sometimes, the good deeds - the priest gives, for our healing and the healing of those we have hurt by our sins.

✚ **Absolution:** The words the priest speaks by which “God, the Father of mercies” reconciles us to Himself through his death and resurrection.

## Going to Confession

1. The 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 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 my sins.”
5. The priest gives a penance and offers advice to help you become a better Catholic.
6. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins.
7. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

## Examination of Conscience

*Ask God to help you make a good confession.  
In quiet reflection ask yourself: Since my last confession...*

- Did I pray to God, daily and from my heart?
- Did I live and witness to my Catholic faith, joyfully and courageously? Did I take God's name in vain? Did I curse anyone or make false oaths? Did I engage in superstitious or occult practices?
- Did I attend and participate actively at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation? Did I fast & abstain on prescribed days?
- Did I respect people in authority? My employer? Did I honour my parents?
- Was I violent or unnecessarily aggressive (e.g., physically, verbally, psychologically, etc.) with anyone?
- Was I prideful, stubborn, or rude with anyone? Did I hold a grudge?
- Did I abuse alcohol, prescription medications, or illegal drugs? Did I overindulge in food?
- Did I consent to, recommend, advise, or actively take part in an abortion? Did I use abortifacient drugs?
- Did I view pornography, entertain lustful thoughts, conversations or actions?
- Was I unloving to my spouse? Did I engage in adulterous activity (e.g., sexual, emotional, virtual, etc.)? Did I use contraceptives?
- Was I neglectful of the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, or physical needs of my spouse, children, or family?
- Did I steal or damage another's property? Was I honest and just in my business relations? Did I waste time at work?
- Did I contribute to the needs of the spiritually and materially poor with my time and resources?
- Did I engage in gossip? Did I lie? Did I speak poorly of others? Did I judge anyone unfairly?
- Did I envy anyone? Was I jealous of others or covet another's belongings?

## Act of Contrition

**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.  
Amen.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

