

Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. Before going to Confession...

- Pray to God to help you to make a good examination of conscience.

For example, “**Holy Father, I desire to enter more deeply into your love, and to be a better disciple of Christ. As I examine my conscience, awake in me new awareness of myself and any way that I have sinned against your love. Stir in me the courage to confront any sins and wounds, and offer them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I ask this in the name of your Son, who died for my salvation. Amen.**”

- Slowly review your Examination of Conscience, paying attention to any stirring in your heart or spirit to anything that the Holy Spirit might be drawing your attention to...memories, thoughts, feelings, desires. Also, remember how long it's been since your last confession.
- Decide what priest you are going to go to confession (if you have a choice), and whether you are going to go face-to-face, or anonymously. The Spirit sometimes changes your mind spontaneously and last-minute. Don't panic, just go with it.

2. Begin, “**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

Bless me, Father, it has been _____ since my last confession, and these are my sins.”

- Bring to the sacrament whatever the Spirit might bring to mind, or what you wrote down. Some priests simply want a list of sins with minimal explanation. Some are open to more of a conversational encounter. Relax; breathe; let the Spirit flow. Think about God's offer of his forgiveness and pardon.
- When you finish confessing your sins, you can say something like,
“For these and all the sins of my past, I ask for forgiveness.”
- The priest may give you some counsel and suggestions, ask questions, then he will give you a penance. He will then prompt you to offer an Act of Contrition.
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For example: “**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. Amen.”**

- The priest will offer the Prayer of Absolution, which ends with the Sign of the Cross.
- Thank the priest and leave the confessional. Then do whatever penance you were given. The fulfillment of your penance is the end of the celebration of the sacrament.