

Praying God's forgiveness

The priest will extend his hands over your head, or at least extend his right hand towards you.

He will then say the prayer of absolution. He prays for God's forgiveness and that you will have the peace of Christ in your heart.

**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.**

At the end of the priest's prayer, make this prayer your own by saying:

Amen.

Giving thanks to God

After the absolution the priest will speak briefly again of God's love and mercy. For example:

**The Lord has freed you from sin.
May he bring you safely
to his kingdom in heaven.
Glory to him for ever.**

You respond: Amen.

The priest will then invite you to:

Go in the peace of Christ.

You respond: Thanks be to God.

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Celebrating God's Love *and* Mercy



The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us live faithfully and well.

It helps the goodness of God to reach into our hearts to:

- **forgive** what needs forgiving
- **set us free** from what hurts us
- **strengthen** what is weak in us
- **refresh** love in us

Celebrating the Sacrament helps us live like Jesus...

Preparing for your Confession

When we prepare for Confession we need to think about what we have done wrong, and are sorry about. We need to think what we need to ask God to forgive us for.

This is not always easy to do. Often we want to hide the things we have done wrong, for fear we might be punished. But with God things are not like that. God does not stop loving us when we have done wrong. God only wants to help us, to help us turn away from what hurts us and hurts others, and turn back to him and to his love and healing. Strengthened by his love and healing we can then live our lives well once more, and even be able to share the love of God with others.

To help you get ready for Confession, and to remember the love of God, it is good to read a favourite Gospel passage. You might read the story of the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan, but there are also many others.

But which ever you choose, read it carefully. Let it speak to your heart. Let it teach you again that God loves you. And then, reminded of how precious you are in God's sight, decide what you need to ask God to forgive and heal when you come to Confession.

Meeting with the priest

The priest will welcome you as you come into the place where the Sacrament is to be celebrated.

Make the 'Sign of the Cross' together with the priest.

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

*Tell the priest a little about yourself,
especially if he does not already know you. For example:*

**'This is my third confession' or
'I last came to Confession eight weeks ago...'**

The priest may then invite you to listen to a passage of scripture, reminding you again of how much God loves us. He will ask you to put your trust in God's love and mercy, and to make your Confession

Confessing your sins, repenting, and asking for forgiveness

Tell the priest what you are sorry for, and what you want God to forgive.

If you forget what you want to mention do not worry. The priest is there to help you with your confession.

The priest may have some words of advice, about how you might make the most of the love that God shows you.

Then he will give you a penance. This may be a prayer to say, or a good deed to do. Always it is something that helps you show God that you are sorry for what you have done and to live your life better in the future.

The priest will then ask you to make your Act of Contrition, a prayer in which you say sorry. There are many Acts of Contrition prayers. Here is a short and simple one. Try to learn it off by heart.

**Lord Jesus, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.**

Another one that is often used is

**O my God,
I thank you for loving me.
I am sorry for all my sins,
for not loving others
and not loving you.
Help me to live like Jesus
and not sin again.
Amen.**

