



## Guide to Receiving the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation


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 **Step 1:** Examine your conscience. Think through the Ten Commandments and pray to the Holy Spirit for help in recognizing your sins.

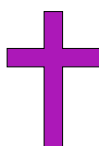
 **Step 2:** Enter the confessional or reconciliation room. Then make the Sign of the Cross and tell the priest how long it has been since your last confession.

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

*"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_\_\_ [amount of time] since my last confession." (Or: "This is my first confession.")*

 **Step 3:** Confess your sins to the priest. Tell him every sin you can remember since your last confession. You don't have to go into a lot of detail, but tell the priest specifically what you have done, or failed to do, and how often.

 **Step 4:** The priest may give you a few words of comfort. He may also give you some advice about how to avoid sin in the future.

 **Step 5:** The priest will give you a penance to complete after you leave the confessional or reconciliation room.



**Step 6:** The priest will ask you to pray an Act of Contrition. There are many forms of this prayer. You may choose to pray this one:

**Say:** *"O my God, I am sorry for my sins. 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."*



**Step 7:** The priest will extend his hands over you and speak the words of absolution:

**The priest says:** *"God, the Father of mercies, through the Death and Resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant 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."*

*While the priest says, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," make the Sign of the Cross.*



**Step 8:** You have now been forgiven of your sins and reconciled with God and the Church! Thanks be to God! Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His gift of forgiveness! Do your penance right away if you are able to. If you can't do the penance you were given right away, make a plan to do it as soon as possible.

