

# BEFORE YOU GO

## **MAKE THE TIME**

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Find a time to go - check out the parish's scheduled times or contact the priest to make an appointment.

## **EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE**

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Take time before you see the priest to examine your conscience. Some guiding questions based on Jesus' teachings and the Ten Commandments can be found inside this pamphlet. Spend a bit of time in contemplation and in prayer. Ask yourself: 'What sins have I committed?' Feel free to make a general list (mental or written) of your sins to bring to confession.

## **AND ALWAYS REMEMBER**

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This is a sacrament of healing. God is not waiting to punish you but to pour out grace and forgiveness so that you may be at peace. There is no need to be anxious, afraid or ashamed. God loves you.



# AFTER THE RITE

## **PRAYING AND YOUR PENANCE**

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Stop for a moment of personal prayer to talk with God. Use your penance as a guide. If the priest assigned any specific prayers for your penance, feel free to do them now. And remember, God has all the time in the world - take as much time as you need.

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## HAVEN'T BEEN TO CONFESSION FOR A WHILE?

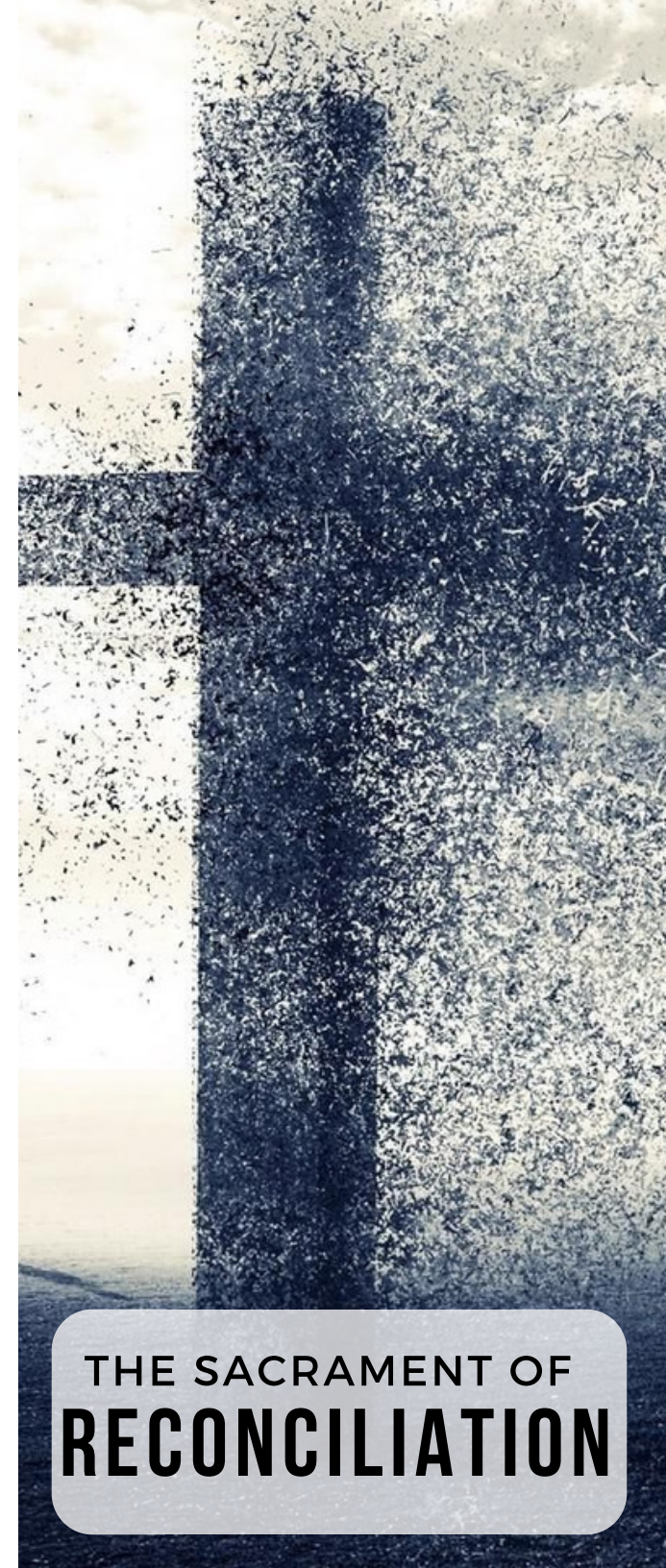
**DON'T WORRY  
JUST COME**

**NO MATTER HOW LONG IT'S BEEN,  
THE MERCY OF GOD ALWAYS RISES  
TO GREET A CONTRITE HEART.**

"But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'  
Matthew 14:27



THE SACRAMENT OF  
**RECONCILIATION**



# RITE OF RECONCILIATION

1. Sit with the priest face to face or behind a screen if you desire - whichever will make you feel the most comfortable. The priest may give you a blessing or greeting, or share a brief Scripture passage.

2. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. If you wish, you may use a formula such as "Forgive me, father, for I have sinned. My last confession was [give the number of weeks, months or years or indicate if it is your first time at confession]." If you feel comfortable, you may also provide some general information about yourself to help give the priest some context.

3. Confess your sins, simply and honestly, to the priest. If you are unsure about how to confess or feel uneasy, ask him to help you. He may have questions for you or ask for clarification. Answer his questions without hiding anything out of fear or shame. Place your trust in God, a merciful Father who wants to forgive you.

4. Following your confession of sins, say "I am sorry for these and all of my sins."

5. The priest assigns you a penance and offers counsel to help you to become a better person.

6. The priest may ask you to pray a prayer expressing your sorrow for your sins and resolving not to sin again. This is known as an Act of Contrition (see right for examples).

7. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then extends his hands over you and pronounces the formula of absolution. You answer, 'Amen'.

8. The priest then dismisses you with the invitation to go in peace.

# EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

## **Prayerfully ask yourself what you have done that was contrary to Jesus' teachings & the Ten Commandments.**

- Do I seek to love God with my whole heart and soul? Does God hold the first place in my life or have I made a god out of my work, my possessions, or my image in the eyes of others? Have I engaged in superstitious practices such as palm reading or fortune-telling?

- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I curse, swear, lie or take a false oath? Have I wished evil on anyone?

- Did I miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation through my own fault? Do I try to be attentive at Mass and when I pray? Have I tried to keep Sunday as a day of rest?

- Do I treat myself, body, mind and soul, with respect? Have I abused drugs or alcohol? Have I intentionally sought to harm myself?

- Did I wilfully look at pornography, entertain impure thoughts or engage in impure conversations or actions? Am I vigilant about what I allow into my mind? Have I opened myself to unhealthy influences?

- Do I harbour anger, resentment or hatred toward anyone? Have I pursued peace in my relationships with others or have my words, attitudes and actions brought harm or division? Is there anyone I need to forgive or from whom I need to ask forgiveness?

- Do I listen to my elders in important matters? Do I treat them with care and compassion?

- Was I faithful to my spouse? Did I engage in sexual activity outside of marriage? Have I been attentive to the needs of my family and to my duties as a spouse and parent?

- Do I foster an atmosphere that nurtures and reveres life? Have I intentionally physically, mentally or spiritually harmed someone or sought their destruction? Have I encouraged anyone to harm themselves or another (for example, to seek an abortion or to commit suicide)?

- Have I been responsive to the needs of the poor and respected the dignity of others? Do I seek to share what I have with the poor and needy?

- Did I steal or damage another's property? Have I been honest and just in my business relations? Am I responsibly generous to others with my time, talents and other treasures?

- Have I envied other people? Do I habitually compare myself with others in terms of wealth or status? Am I jealous of others personal qualities, family, possessions or success?

- Have I tried to be a good steward and protector of the Earth in my personal life and business dealings?

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## ACT OF CONTRITION

1. Oh my God, I am very sorry for having sinned against you. I detest all of my sins because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

2. O Loving God, I am sorry for the wrong things I have done and for the good things I have not done. Please forgive me. Open my heart to your Spirit and help me to grow in love. I ask you this through your son, Jesus. Amen.

3. Lord Jesus, you chose to be called the friend of sinners. By your saving death and resurrection, free me from my sins. May your peace take root in my heart and bring forth a harvest of love, holiness, and truth. Amen.