

THE ROMAN RITUAL

**Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council
and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI**

THE RITE OF PENANCE

**APPROVED FOR USE IN THE DIOCESES OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY THE
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
AND CONFIRMED BY THE APOSTOLIC SEE**

**With Complete Biblical Readings
Taken from the Revised Lectionary for Mass**

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RITE OF PENANCE

INTRODUCTION

I. THE MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION IN THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

1. The Father has shown forth his mercy by reconciling the world to himself in Christ and by making peace for all things on earth and in heaven by the blood of Christ on the cross.¹ The Son of God made man lived among men in order to free them from the slavery of sin² and to call them out of darkness into his wonderful light.³ He therefore began his work on earth by preaching repentance and saying: “Turn away from sin and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15).

This invitation to repentance, which had often been sounded by the prophets, prepared the hearts of men for the coming of the Kingdom of God through the voice of John the Baptist who came “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4).

Jesus, however, not only exhorted men to repentance so that they should abandon their sins and turn wholeheartedly to the Lord,⁴ but he also welcomed sinners and reconciled them with the Father.⁵ Moreover, by healing the sick he signified his power to forgive sin.⁶ Finally, he himself died for our sins and rose again for our justification.⁷ Therefore, on the night he was betrayed and began his saving passion,⁸ he instituted the sacrifice of the new covenant in his blood for the forgiveness of sins.⁹ After his resurrection he sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, empowering them to forgive or retain sins¹⁰ and sending them forth to all peoples to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in his name.¹¹

The Lord said to Peter, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed also in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). In obedience to this command, on the day of Pentecost Peter preached the forgiveness of sins by baptism: “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38).¹² Since then the Church has never failed to call men from sin to conversion and by the celebration of penance to show the victory of Christ over sin.

RITE FOR RECONCILIATION OF INDIVIDUAL PENITENTS

RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

41. When the penitent comes to confess his sins, the priest welcomes him warmly and greets him with kindness.

42. Then the penitent makes the sign of the cross which the priest may make also.

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

The priest invites the penitent to have trust in God, in these or similar words:

1

May God, who has enlightened every heart,
help you to know your sins
and trust in his mercy.

The penitent answers:

Amen.

2

The Lord does not wish the sinner to die
but to turn back to him and live.
Come before him with trust in his mercy.

[67]
(Ezekiel 33:11)

3

May the Lord Jesus welcome you.
He came to call sinners, not the just.
Have confidence in him.

[68]
(Luke 5:32)

4

May the grace of the Holy Spirit
fill your heart with light,
that you may confess your sins with loving trust
and come to know that God is merciful.

[69]

CONFESSION OF SINS AND ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

44. Where it is the custom, the penitent says a general formula for confession (for example, I confess to almighty God) before he confesses his sins.

If necessary, the priest helps the penitent to make an integral confession and gives him suitable counsel. He urges him to be sorry for his faults, reminding him that through the sacrament of penance the Christian dies and rises with Christ and is thus renewed in the paschal mystery. The priest proposes an act of penance which the penitent accepts to make satisfaction for sin and to amend his life.

The priest should make sure that he adapts his counsel to the penitent's circumstances.

PRAYER OF THE PENITENT AND ABSOLUTION

45. The priest then asks the penitent to express his sorrow, which the penitent may do in these or similar words:

1

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.

RITE FOR RECONCILIATION OF SEVERAL PENITENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

INTRODUCTORY RITES

SONG

48. When the faithful have assembled, they may sing a psalm, antiphon, or other appropriate song while the priest is entering the church, for example:

1

Hear us, Lord,
for you are merciful and kind.
In your great compassion,
look on us with love.

2

Let us come with confidence before the throne of grace
to receive God's mercy,
and we shall find pardon and strength
in our time of need.

GREETING

49. After the song the priest greets the congregation:

1

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you
from God the Father
and Christ Jesus our Savior.

R. And also with you.

RITE FOR RECONCILIATION OF SEVERAL PENITENTS WITH GENERAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

60. For the reconciliation of several penitents with general confession and absolution, in the cases provided for in the law, everything is done as described above for the reconciliation of several penitents with individual absolution, but with the following changes only.

INSTRUCTION

After the homily or as part of the homily, the priest explains to the faithful who wish to receive general absolution that they should be properly disposed. Each one should repent of his sins and resolve to turn away from these sins, to make up for any scandal and harm he may have caused, and to confess individually at the proper time each of the serious sins which cannot now be confessed. Some form of satisfaction should be proposed to all, and each individual may add something if he desires.

GENERAL CONFESSION

61. Then the deacon or other minister or the priest himself invites the penitents who wish to receive absolution to indicate this by some kind of sign. He may say:

1

Will those of you who wish to receive sacramental absolution please kneel and acknowledge that you are sinners.

2

Will those of you who wish to receive sacramental absolution please bow your heads and acknowledge that you are sinners.

Or he may suggest a sign laid down by the episcopal conference.

The penitents say a general formula for confession (for example, I confess to almighty God). A litany or appropriate song may follow, as described above for the reconciliation of several penitents with individual confession and absolution (no. 54). The Lord's Prayer is always added at the end.

GENERAL ABSOLUTION

62. The priest then gives absolution, holding his hands extended over the penitents and saying:

1

God the Father does not wish the sinner to die
but to turn back to him and live.
He loved us first and sent his Son into the world to be its
Savior.
May he show you his merciful love and give you peace.

R. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was given up to death for our sins,
and rose again for our justification.
He sent the Holy Spirit on his apostles
and gave them power to forgive sins.
Through the ministry entrusted to me
may he deliver you from evil
and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

The Spirit, the Comforter, was given to us for the forgive-
ness of sins.
In him we approach the Father.
May he cleanse your hearts and clothe you in his glory,
so that you may proclaim the mighty acts of God
who has called you out of darkness into the splendor of
his light.

R. Amen.

And I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠
and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.