

THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE
PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

GOD RICH IN MERCY

(Eph 2:4)

PASTORAL RESOURCE

I

II

III

IV

24 HOURS FOR
THE LORD

MARCH 13-14, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this resource is to offer some suggestions that will enable parishes and Christian communities to prepare themselves to live the initiative *24 Hours for the Lord*. Obviously, these suggestions may be adapted to local needs and customs.

In Rome, Pope Francis will preside over a penitential celebration in the Basilica of Saint Peter. Parishes and communities may seize the opportunity to start this day in the same way, in the late afternoon or evening of Friday, March 13. For the celebration of penance, please see the *Rite of Penance for Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*.

It would be important to arrange for the parish church to be open on the evening of Friday, March 13, and during the entire day on Saturday, March 14, in order to make available Confession, preferably celebrated in the context of a guided service of Eucharistic adoration. The 24-hour period might then be concluded with the celebration of the festive Holy Mass of Saturday evening.



I

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

(*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

296. What is the name of this sacrament?

It is called the sacrament of Penance, the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of Forgiveness, the sacrament of Confession, and the sacrament of Conversion.

297. Why is there a sacrament of Reconciliation after Baptism?

Since the new life of grace received in Baptism does not abolish the weakness of human nature nor the inclination to sin (that is, *concupiscence*), Christ instituted this sacrament for the conversion of the baptized who have been separated from him by sin.

298. When did he institute this sacrament?

The risen Lord instituted this sacrament on the evening of Easter when he showed himself to his apostles and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).

III

INDIVIDUAL CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

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

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:

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

The penitent answers:

Amen.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD (Optional)

CONFESSION OF SINS AND ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

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.

IV

LIVING THE GRACE RECEIVED IN THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a privileged moment in which God grants His mercy. If man thought that he might be able to merit salvation by some means, every attempt to attain it would generate the frustration of never “doing enough” (*satis facere*) to merit such grace.

The relationship of God and man does not rest on a dynamic of expiation of one’s own sins. The confession of sins, even if repeated many times, does not make us “worthy” of God’s love, but opens us up to the awareness that the grace received sacramentally is the gift that transforms the heart and the way that leads to the forgiveness of sins. God awaits and welcomes the small steps of the one who returns to Him, and He does not demand perfection in order to grant His benevolence. This allows every person to surrender himself to the embrace of the Father and to begin again. The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation does not make us “sinless,” but strengthens our desire to respond to God’s gracious love.

Life, renewed by the experience of the Sacrament, becomes for the believer the opportunity to give to others that which he has received from God. As happens in human relationships, in which the beloved desires to respond to the lover’s goodness, the forgiven person experiences that the utter graciousness of the love received is a model