

# HOW?

## THE ORDER OF PENANCE

The Church celebrates the Sacrament of Penance  
using the *Order of Penance*.

The revised rites and formulas of the *Order of Penance*  
of the Second Vatican Council were promulgated in 1973.

A new translation was provided in 2023.

Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance or “going to  
confession” is a liturgical action that consists of:

1. The Reception of the Penitent
2. The Reading of the Word of God (Optional)
3. The Confession of Sins and The Acceptance of Satisfaction
4. The Prayer of the Penitent and The Absolution
5. The Proclamation of Praise of God  
and The Dismissal of the Penitent

## THE ACTS OF THE PENITENT

1. Contrition (sorrow for sin)
2. Confession (inward examination,  
outward accusation)
3. Satisfaction (an act of penance)

"Penance requires . . .  
the sinner to endure  
all things willingly,  
be contrite of heart,  
confess with the lips,  
and practice complete  
humility and fruitful  
satisfaction."

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1450)*



## Going to Confession in Twelve Easy Steps

1. Examine your conscience, call to mind your sins, and then enter the confessional.
2. The priest will welcome and receive you.
3. Make the sign of the cross and say: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
4. The priest will invite you to trust in God. He may also read a text of Sacred Scripture.
5. Say these or similar words:  
"Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_\_ long since my last confession. These are my sins..."
6. Tell the priest your sins. Then say these or similar words: "For these and all of my sins, I am sorry."
7. Accept your work of penance (prayers, act of kindness, etc.) to help make satisfaction and amend your life.
8. Express your sorrow for your sins (Act of Contrition) in these or similar words:  
"O my God, I am sorry and repent with all my heart for all the wrong I have done  
and for the good I have failed to do,  
because by sinning I have offended you,  
who are all good and worthy to be loved above all things.  
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to do penance, to sin no more,  
and to avoid the occasions of sin.  
Through the merits of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ, Lord, have mercy."
9. Receive God's forgiveness as the priest prays the Prayer of Absolution.
10. At the end of the Prayer of Absolution, reply: "Amen."
11. Give praise to God. When the priest says: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,"  
conclude: "For his mercy endures forever."
12. Go in peace and remember to...