

# Confession

The priest will then invite you to confess your sins.

Do not worry if, having prepared, you find you forget things or your mind goes blank. The priest will be ready to help you make a good confession.

The priest will also reflect with you on the things you confess, helping you to know sorrow for your sins, and also to see where the love of God might help you to live more lovingly and faithfully, even where life can be most difficult.

He will also offer you an act of penance, a way of responding even now to the love and mercy of God. This may be a prayer, an act of self-denial, but may also well be an act of service or charity to others.

# Prayer of Sorrow

The priest will then invite you to make your prayer of sorrow. You may already know such a prayer. Otherwise this is one of the prayers the Church recommends.

**Lord Jesus, Son of God,  
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

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**Lord Jesus, Son of God,  
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# Absolution

The priest will then extend his hands over your head and say the words of Absolution. By these words the priest proclaims the saving work of God, who has reconciled the world to himself through the saving mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit. He prays that God will grant you pardon of sin and the gift of peace, and he absolves you from your sin in the name of God: Father, Son and Spirit.

At the end of the priest's prayer you should say:

**Amen.**

After the Absolution the priest will speak bringing the celebration to an end in words such as:

Go in peace  
and proclaim to the world  
the wonderful works of God,  
who has brought you salvation.

You can respond by saying:

**Amen or Thanks be to God.**

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**Liturgy  
Office**  
ENGLAND  
& WALES

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# Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Season of Lent

**N**ow, now —  
it is the Lord who speaks —  
come back to me  
with all your heart,  
fasting, weeping, mourning',  
Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn,  
turn to the Lord your God again,  
for he is all tenderness and compassion,  
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,  
and ready to relent.

Joel 2.12-13

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During the season of Lent the Church seeks to prepare for a fuller sharing in the Easter mystery of Christ's saving love. The faithful, through prayer and attentiveness to the word of God, prepare themselves by penance for the renewal of their baptismal promises. At this same time the catechumens are prepared for their reception of the sacraments of Christian Initiation by the rite of election and scrutinies and by catechesis. Lent is for both catechumens and the faithful a time for purification and enlightenment.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and the reception of ashes. In this sign we outwardly express our guilt before God and prompted by the hope that the Lord is kind and compassionate, patient and unbounding in mercy, express our desire for inward conversion. This sign is also to beginning of the journey of conversion that will reach its goal in the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation during the days leading to Easter.

Hear, Lord, the prayers we offer from contrite hearts.  
Have pity on us as we acknowledge our sins.  
Lead us back to the way of holiness.  
Protect us now and always  
from the wounds of sin.  
May we ever keep safe in all its fullness  
the gift your love once gave us  
and your mercy now restores.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

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Amen.

*If it has been a while since you celebrated the sacrament on a one-to-one basis with a priest, you might find this card helpful in preparing. It may also be of use to you during the celebration as a reminder of the order of the celebration and of some of the prayers.*

## Beginnings

The priest will welcome you into the place where you will celebrate the sacrament.

You will make the Sign of the Cross together:

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

The priest will invite you to place your trust in God in words such as:

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

Introduce yourself briefly to the priest—saying for example how long it has been since your last confession, or whether you are married or single. It is a great help to the priest to know just a little of the circumstances of the person he will be minister to.

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## The Word of God

Whenever there is the opportunity the priest will include in the celebration a reading from the scriptures, so that we can hear again of God's mercy and his call for us to turn to him.

It is often helpful to prepare for celebrating the sacrament by reading and reflecting on a passage of scripture. In which case tell the priest what you have read and read a line to him that has struck you.

You might find in your church cards with a variety of passages that the Church listens to during Lent. You might have another favourite passage you would prefer to use, perhaps from other readings at Mass. Or you might like to use this passage.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offences truly I know them;  
my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;  
what is evil in your sight I have done.

*From Psalm 50*

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