

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.

**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

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Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Season of Advent

If we say we have no sin in us,
we are deceiving ourselves
and refusing to admit the truth;
but if we acknowledge our sins,
then God who is faithful and just
will forgive our sins
and purify us
from everything that is wrong.

1 John 1.8-9

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During the season of Advent Christians prepare for Christmas, the celebration of Christ's birth at Bethlehem. It is also a time when we consider whether we have allowed the teaching of Christ to be 'born' in us. Do we live as the gospel invites us to live?

Advent offers time for prayer and reflection to see where we need to ask forgiveness for sin in our lives, and where we need to ask for the grace to live more faithfully, more lovingly.

Advent is a time when many members of the Church will want to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation, to receive the particular help that the sacrament can give us in living as we would choose.

Lord our God,
on the first day of creation
you made the light
that scatters all darkness.
let Christ, the light of lights,
hidden from all eternity,
shine at last on your people
and free us from the darkness of sin.
Fill our lives with good works
as we go out to meet your Son,
so that we might give him a fitting welcome.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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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 Advent. 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.

Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth and teach me:
for you are God my saviour.

The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
He teaches his way to the poor.

From Psalm 24

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