

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

It is important that one prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation by a process of prayer and reflection. You might reflect upon the ways you have sinned. You may also tell the priest something good you've done.

The priest will greet you and invite you to place your sins before Jesus Christ. If you are nervous or have not been to Confession for a while, say that to the priest and he will put you at ease. If you have properly prepared to celebrate the Sacrament through an Examination of Conscience, you are now ready to confess your sins. The priest may engage you in conversation if this seems appropriate. He will then suggest a penance to you. The purpose of the penance is to express in some concrete, though symbolic way, remorse for our sins and to draw closer to God and those we have offended. You are then invited to say an Act of Contrition. While you may choose to say this in your own words, many people seem flustered at this point because they do not know an Act of Contrition. May I suggest one of the following:

Act of Contrition:

1 -- "O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. But I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love, I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

2 -- "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me, a sinner."

3 -- "Lord God, in your goodness have mercy on me: do not look on my sins but take away all my guilt. Create in me a clean heart and renew within me an upright spirit."

4 -- "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 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. Amen."

The priest will wait for you to finish your Act of Contrition and you can then listen as he pronounces the words of absolution. *"God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you of all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*

May the Lord give you peace.

Father Jim McNamara