

Reconciliation

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week,” Jesus showed himself to his apostles. “He breathed on them, 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’” (Jn 20:19, 22-23).

The forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation. (CCC, 1486)

The sinner wounds God’s honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone. (CCC, 1487)

To the eyes of faith no evil is graver than sin and nothing has worse consequences for sinners themselves, for the Church, and for the whole world. (CCC, 1488)

To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others. (CCC, 1489)

The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God’s mercy. (CCC, 1490)

The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest’s absolution. The penitent’s acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation. (CCC, 1491)

The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:

- reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;
- reconciliation with the Church;
- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
- an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle. (CCC, 1496)

Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church. (CCC, 1497)

Baptized Catholics who have attained the age of reason (normally age 7) may be prepared by the local parish to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents should contact the pastor of the local parish for more information on the program of preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. If you have been baptized in another Christian religion and are interested in becoming Catholic, please contact your local parish about making a profession of faith through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).