

**The
Sacrament
of Penance
and
Reconciliation**

PRAYER

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.



Four Dimensions of Penance

Memorial

Sacrament recalls the times
God called the Israelites back
and the times Jesus forgave
sinners

Celebration

Reflects great joy at God's
mercy and forgiveness

Communion

Restores your fellowship with
God, others, and yourself

Transformation

Offers a rebirth as a result of
God's sanctifying grace

Penitent

A person who admits his or her sins, is truly sorry for having sinned, and wishes to be restored to relationship with God and the Church.



Historical Milestones for the Sacrament of Penance

Date	Practice	Outcome
AD 140-150	Early Christians who committed serious sins were admitted to the Order of Penitents	Performed rigorous penance for years. Sinners could not receive Holy Communion or socialize with Christians. Typically only done once in their lives.
Seventh Century	No bishop available to absolve people in Order of Penitents. Irish missionaries began to hear private confessions.	Sinners confessed their sins, expressed sorrow, and performed a penance before receiving absolution.
End of the Middle Ages	Common advice encouraged confession before each reception of Holy Communion.	Most people avoided receiving Eucharist except on rare occasions.
Early Twentieth Century	Pope Pius X promoted frequent communion for laypeople .	More Catholics began to go to confession, sometimes weekly. A clear emphasis on only mortal sin debarring someone from Communion.
Second Vatican Council	New Rite of Penance emphasized the call to an ongoing covenant of love and friendship.	Celebrates the Mercy of God who continually calls us back to union with him.

Baptism

- Baptism washed away sin and was thought to be sufficient

Sin

- Humans have an inclination to sin.
- People were excommunicated in the early Church for grave sin.

Reconciliation

- We turn to this Sacrament when we damage our relationship with God to restore our communion with him

Eucharist

- Regular sacramental practice renews our baptismal promise and reconciliation with God



And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (Jn 20:22–23)

Three ways to celebrate Penance



Private individual confession: This is the “only ordinary way” to be reconciled with God after mortal sin. Can be done anonymously behind a screen or face to face with a priest.

Communal celebration with individual confession and absolution: Commonly done during Advent and Lent at parishes, a communal celebration includes a common examination of conscience and a communal request for forgiveness of sins.

Communal celebration with general confession absolution: Reserved for rare cases of grave necessity by discretion of the bishop.

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their head bowed and hands clasped in front of them. The background is a warm, orange-hued sunset or sunrise sky. The person is positioned in the center-right of the frame, with their back to the viewer.

Examination of Conscience

An honest self-assessment of how well you have lived God's covenant of love, leading you to accept responsibility for your sins and to realize your need for God's merciful forgiveness.

Contrition

Heartfelt sorrow for sins committed, along with the intention of sinning no more. This most important act of penitents is necessary for receiving absolution in the Sacrament of Penance.

Perfect Contrition

You have sorrow for sin because you love God and want to be in relationship with him.

Imperfect Contrition

You have sorrow for sin because you fear punishment or perceive the ugliness of sin.

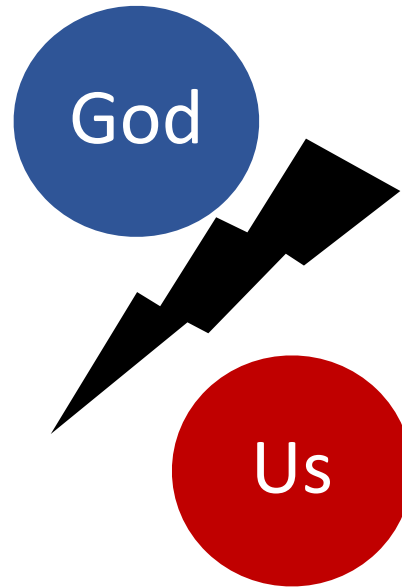
Mortal sin

- Mortal sin destroys or kills your relationship with God and the Church. If not repented and forgiven by God, mortal sin removes you from God's Kingdom and leads you to hell.
- Confession is required for a return to full communion with God

vs.

Venial sin

- Venial sin weakens your relationship with God and the Church.
- Confession is not strictly required for venial sin, but the Church encourages you to confess these sins as a way to admit your need for God's grace and mercy.



Journal Question

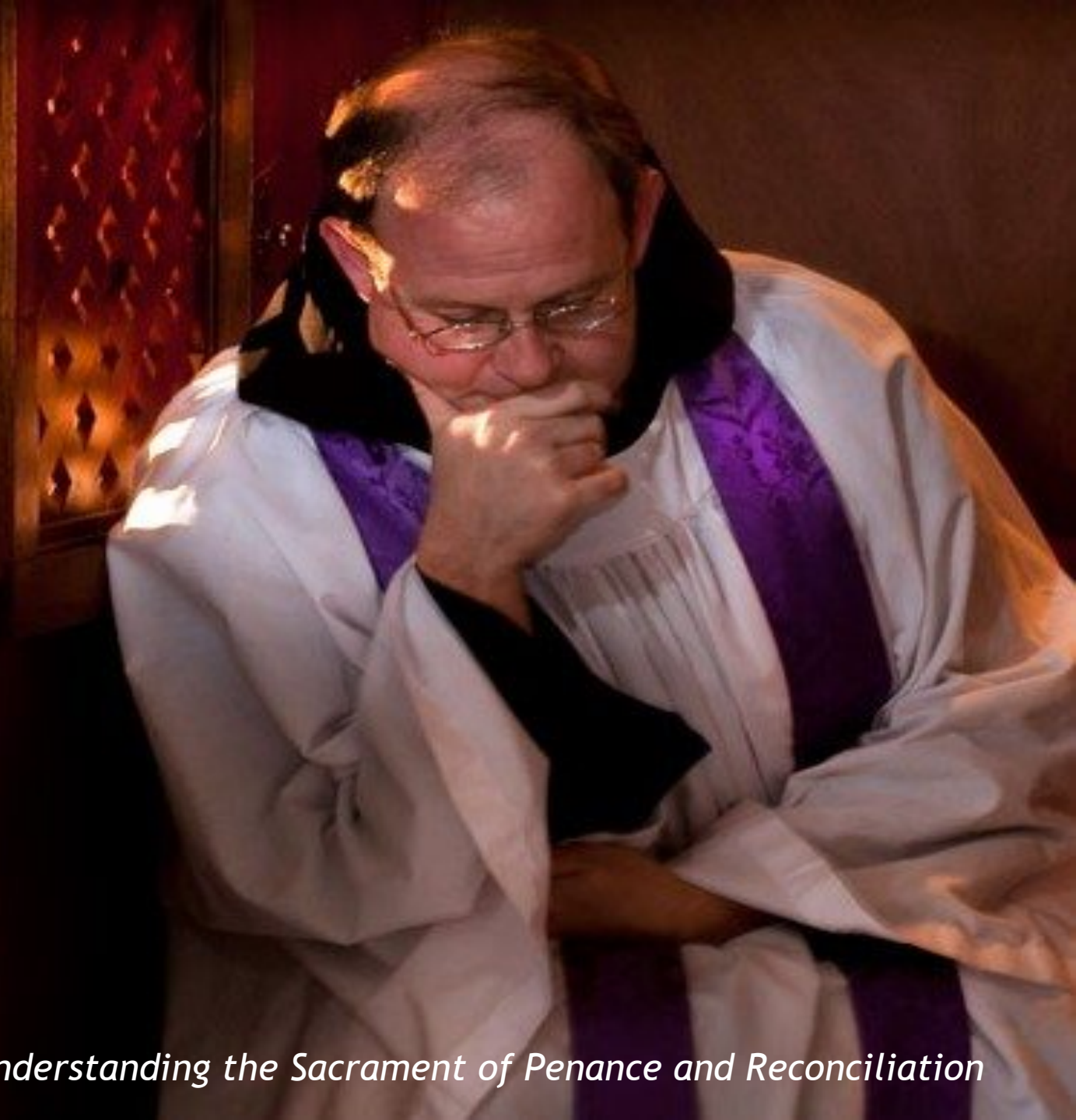
Think of a time when someone has hurt you or broken your relationship with them by some action. How was this situation resolved?



Sacramental Seal

The secrecy priests are bound to keep regarding any sins confessed to them.

- "...It is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner or for any reason" (*Code of Canon Law No. 2490*)



Ways of Penance



prayer



an offering



works of
mercy



service to
neighbor



voluntary
self-denial



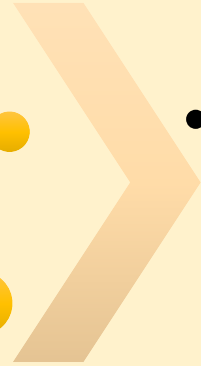
sacrifices

Absolution



“God, the Father of mercies, through the Death and the 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 from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. “ (*Rite of Penance*, 46)

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- Sin weakens or breaks your connection with God and others



• *The
Sacrament of
Penance*



- **Reconciled to God**
- **Peace of conscience**
- **Spiritual consolation**
- **Life filled with Grace and Blessings**

Consequences associated with Sin

	Kind of Sin Affected	Consequence	Ways to expiate punishment for sin
Spiritual	Mortal	Eternal hell	Confession
Temporal	Venial, Mortal	Time spent in Purgatory for purification and admittance into Heaven	Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, good work or sacrifice, indulgences

Indulgences

- An **indulgence** is the remission of temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven (CCC 1471)
- **Plenary Indulgence** remits all of one's punishment. A person must be in a state of grace and intentional about the indulgence
- **Partial Indulgence** wipes out a portion of one's punishment



Excommunication

- The *Code of Canon Law* (1983) specifies that an excommunicated person is forbidden to participate in a ministerial capacity (celebrant, lector, etc.) in the Sacrifice of the Mass or in any other form of public worship; to celebrate or to receive the sacraments; to exercise any ecclesiastical office or ministry; and to issue any act of governance (#1331.1)
- The purpose of excommunication is to shock the sinner into repentance and conversion so they realize the gravity of their sins.
- If excommunicated for a few grievous sins the ban can only be lifted by the Pope (1367, 1370, 1378, 1982, 1388).

Ways the Sacrament of Penance

TRANSFORMS YOU

Commitment to
PRACTICING DISCIPLINE

Ability to **FORGIVE**

Strength to **REFRAIN FROM
ANGER AND REVENGE SEEKING**

Fortitude to **PURSUE
JUSTICE AND PEACE**

Grace to **RESPOND TO
THE CALL TO PERFECTION**