

CHAPTER I

THE ORDER FOR RECONCILING INDIVIDUAL PENITENTS

THE RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT

41. When the penitent comes to confess his (her) sins, the Priest welcomes him (her) with kindness and greets him (her) with friendly words.
42. Then the penitent and, if appropriate, the Priest as well, sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross, saying:

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

The Priest invites the penitent to have trust in God, in these or similar words:

**May God, who has shone his light in our hearts
grant that you may truly know your sins
and his mercy.**

The penitent replies:

Amen.

Other optional texts, nos. 67–71.

THE READING OF THE WORD OF GOD (OPTIONAL)

43. Then, if appropriate, the Priest reads or recites from memory a text of Sacred Scripture in which God's mercy is announced and people are called to conversion.

The texts are found at nos. 72–84.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

44. Next, the penitent confesses his (her) sins, after first saying, where it is the custom, a general formula for confession (e.g., I confess to almighty God).

If necessary, the Priest assists the penitent to make an integral confession, offers him (her) suitable counsel, and urges him (her) to have contrition for his (her) faults, reminding him (her) that through the Sacrament of Penance a Christian, by dying and rising with Christ, is renewed in the Paschal Mystery. Then the Priest proposes a work of penance that the penitent accepts to make satisfaction for sin and to amend his (her) life.

The Priest should take care that he adapts to the penitent's circumstances in every way, whether in the manner of speaking or even in the counsel provided.

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT AND THE ABSOLUTION

45. The Priest then invites the penitent to express his (her) contrition, which the penitent may do in these or similar words:

O my God,
I am sorry and repent with all my heart
for all the wrong I have done
and for the good I have failed to do,
because by sinning I have offended you,
who are all good and worthy to be loved above all things.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid the occasions of sin.
Through the merits of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ,
Lord, have mercy.

Other optional texts, nos. 85–92.

CHAPTER II

THE ORDER FOR RECONCILING SEVERAL PENITENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

48. Liturgical Song

When the faithful are gathered, and as the Priest enters the church, if appropriate, a Psalm, antiphon, or other appropriate liturgical song may be sung, e.g.:

Answer us, Lord, for your mercy is kind;
in the abundance of your mercies, look upon us.

Or:

With boldness let us approach the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy
and find grace as a timely help.

49. Greeting

When the singing is concluded the Priest begins with the Sign of the Cross, then greets those present:

**Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father
and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

R. And with your spirit.

Or:

**Grace and peace to you from God the Father and from Jesus Christ,
who loved us and washed away our sins in his Blood.**

R. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Other optional texts, nos. 94–96.

Then the Priest himself or another minister instructs those present with a brief address about the importance and purpose of the celebration and about the order of the service.

50. Prayer

Then the Priest invites all to pray, in these or similar words:

**Let us pray, brothers and sisters (brethren),
that God, who calls us to conversion,
will grant us the grace of true and fruitful repentance.**

And all pray in silence for a while. Then the Priest says the prayer:

**Graciously hear the prayers of those who call upon you,
we ask, O Lord,
and forgive the sins of those who confess to you,
granting us in your kindness both pardon and peace.
Through Christ our Lord.**

All:

Amen.

Or:

**Set your Spirit in our midst, O Lord,
to wash us in the cleansing waters of repentance
and to make of us a living sacrifice to you,
so that, as he gives us life,
we may everywhere praise your glory
and confess your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.**

All:

Amen.

Other optional texts, nos. 97–100.

Spare those who confess their sins,
so that turned from the way of error to the paths of justice
they may never again be harmed by new wounds.
Rather, may what your grace bestowed and your mercy restored
remain for them always intact.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

The celebration then ends with an appropriate liturgical song and the dismissal of the people.

SECOND EXAMPLE

*“Penance prepares for a fuller participation
in the Paschal Mystery of Christ for the salvation of the world”*

14. a) After an appropriate liturgical song and the greeting by the minister, the faithful are briefly led to an understanding that they are connected with each other in sin and in repentance, so that each one should feel himself (herself) called to conversion for the sanctification of the whole community.

15. b) Prayer

My brothers and sisters,
let us pray that by penance we may be united with Christ,
who was crucified for our sins,
and so share with all people in his Resurrection.

Let us kneel (or: Bow your heads before God).

All pray in silence for a while.

Let us stand (or: Raise your heads).

O Lord, our God and Father,
who have given us life through the Passion of your Son,
grant that, joined through penance to his Death,
we may also be sharers, with all people, in his Resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Or:

**Grant, almighty and merciful Father,
that, moved and strengthened by your Spirit,
we may always carry in our bodies the Death of Jesus,
that his life may also be shown forth in us.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

16. c) Readings

—Like a meek lamb, the Servant of the Lord takes up and bears the sins of the people, that by his wounds they may be healed. Through penance the disciples of Christ can weep for and expiate in themselves the sins of the whole world.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

53:1–7, 10–12

Who would believe what we have heard?

To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

He grew up like a sapling before him,
like a shoot from the parched earth;

There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him,
nor appearance that would attract us to him.

He was spurned and avoided by people,
a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity,

One of those from whom people hide their faces,
spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,
our sufferings that he endured,
While we thought of him as stricken,
as one smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our offenses,
crushed for our sins;

Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
by his stripes we were healed.

APPENDIX III

FORM FOR THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

1. This form is proposed for the examination of conscience, to be completed and adapted according to local usages and the needs of different individuals.

2. When an examination of conscience is made before the Sacrament of Penance, it is appropriate that each should ask himself (herself) the following questions before all others:

1. Do I come to the Sacrament of Penance with a sincere desire for purification, conversion, renewal of life, and deeper friendship with God, or do I consider it rather as a burden to be undertaken as seldom as possible?

2. Did I forget, or deliberately fail to mention, any grave sins in previous confessions?

3. Have I performed the penance imposed on me? Have I made reparation for injuries committed? Have I put into practice the purpose of amendment of life, according to the Gospel?

3. In the light of the word of God, each individual should examine his (her) life.

I. The Lord says: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart” (Mt 22:37).

1. Is my heart directed to God, so that I truly love him above all things by the faithful keeping of his commandments, as a son loves his father, or am I more concerned with worldly matters? Do I have a right intention in what I do?

2. Do I have firm faith in God, who has spoken to us through his Son? Have I adhered firmly to the teaching of the Church? Have I taken care to be instructed in the Christian faith, listening to the word of God, participating in catechesis, avoiding things harmful to the faith? Have I always professed my faith in God and the Church boldly, without fear? Have I been willing to be known as a Christian in my private and public life?

3. Have I said my morning and evening prayers, or not? Is my prayer a true conversation with God, in mind and heart, or merely an exterior observance? Have I offered to God my difficulties, my joys, and my sorrows? Do I turn to him in temptations?

4. Do I have reverence and love for God's name, or have I offended God by blasphemy, by swearing falsely, or by taking his name in vain? Have I been irreverent to the Blessed Virgin Mary or to the Saints?
5. Do I keep the Lord's Day and the feasts of the Church by actively, reverently, and attentively participating in public worship, especially the Mass? Have I obeyed the precept of annual confession and Communion at Easter?
6. Do I perhaps have other gods, that is to say, things for which I care more, or in which I trust in more than God, such as money, superstitions, spirit-worship, or other occult practices?

II. The Lord says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12).

1. Do I have a genuine love for my neighbor, or do I misuse them for my own ends, or do to them what I do not wish to be done to me by others? Have I given grave scandal to them by my words and actions?
2. Consider whether, within your family, you have contributed to the good and joy of others through patience and genuine love, whether as children you have been obedient to your parents, showing them honor and offering them help in their spiritual and material needs; or whether, as parents, you have been careful to bring your children up in the Christian faith, helping them by good example and parental discipline; or as spouses, you have been faithful to one another in your hearts and in your dealings with others?
3. Do I share my goods with others who are poorer than myself? As far as I can, do I defend the oppressed, comfort the sorrowful, help those in need, or have I despised my neighbor, especially the poor, the frail, the old, strangers, and people of a different race?
4. Am I mindful, in my life, of the mission I received at my Confirmation? Have I taken part in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and in the life of the parish? Have I helped to meet the needs of the Church and prayed for them, e.g., for the unity of the Church, for the evangelization of peoples, for peace and justice, etc.?
5. Am I concerned for the good and prosperity of the human community in which I live, or do I spend my life caring only for myself? Do I take part, to the best of my ability, in promoting justice, morality, concord, and charity in human society? Have I done my civic duty? Have I paid my taxes?
6. In my work or profession am I just, industrious, honest, offering my services to society out of love? Have I given a fair wage to my employees and those who serve me? Have I kept my promises and contracts?
7. Have I obeyed the lawful authorities and shown them due respect?