

RITE OF CONFESSION

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, using these or similar words:

**BLESS ME, FATHER, FOR I HAVE SINNED.
MY LAST CONFESSION WAS ____ AGO.
THESE ARE MY SINS: _____.**

Finish confessing your sins with these or similar words:

**I AM SORRY FOR THESE SINS
AND ALL THE SINS OF MY LIFE,
ESPECIALLY FOR THE SIN OF ____.**

After receiving your Penance, make an Act of Contrition,
using these or similar words of sincere repentance:

**LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD,
HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER.**

FILL ME WITH YOUR SPIRIT,
SO THAT I MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE.

HELP ME TO KNOW YOU, TO LOVE YOU,
AND TO SERVE YOU IN THIS WORLD,

SO THAT I MAY BE HAPPY WITH YOU,
BOTH NOW, AND FOR ALL ETERNITY.

THANK YOU, LORD. AMEN.

When the Priest says the prayer of Absolution,
make the Sign of the Cross as he blesses you.

ONE BAPTISM MANY CONFESSIONS

As we recite in the Creed at Mass, we express our belief in “one baptism.” That one baptism, as distinguished from the ritual Mikvah baths of Saint John the Baptist, is the Sacrament of Baptism instituted by Jesus Christ for our salvation.

The Sacrament of Baptism has two special characteristics that also contrast with that of Saint John and the Qumran reform movement of late Judaism. Those two characteristics of Sacramental Baptism are “Spirit” and “Fire.”

First, Sacramental Baptism is truly of the Holy Spirit. More than just an ordinance to perform out of obedience to Scripture, we become a new creation in Christ through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

Second, Sacramental Baptism involves Fire. More than just lukewarm religiosity or cultural spirituality, the grace of this Sacrament transforms us from within and leads us into holiness of life and the righteousness of faith.

While there is only one Baptism, there are many opportunities for the renewal of that one Baptism. The “Spirit” is unleashed anew, and the “Fire” is re-enchanted within our hearts in the Sacrament of Penance throughout our lives of faith.

Thus, every Confession we devoutly make is an opportunity for us to receive a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and a reigniting of the flame of religious zeal within our hearts to live our baptismal faith more fully each day.

So, the Sacrament of Penance is what we are really talking about when we use terms such as a Baptism “in the Holy Spirit” or “of the Holy Spirit.” In Confession, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit and Fire truly comes into our spiritual lives.

In a way, what the Spirit is to the Sacrament of Baptism, the Fire is to the Sacrament of Confession. In other words, what is begun in Baptism is renewed in Confession, when we recommit our lives to Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Lord.

Further, Repentance and Penance are two aspects of our conversion in faith. Repentance is a turning point in our lives, and Penance is a realignment of our lives to Christ whenever we have fallen away from him and then seek to return to him.

Every Confession is thus a Profession of Faith in Christ as our Savior and a renewal of our Baptism. As such, Confession is a vital part of our ongoing conversion. A fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Fire come to us, then, in Confession.

Thus, in the Sacrament of Penance, we should first confess our “sin” and then confess our “sins.” What is the difference? While our “sins” may be many, our “sin” is our fallen human condition in which we try to place ourselves above and beyond God in our lives. Of this condition, we must surely repent!

So, you say that this has not been your experience when you go to Confession? Well, have you worthily prepared to receive this holy Sacrament well? We know what it takes to worthily receive the Eucharist; it is similar to preparing for Confession.



Step One: Admit your Sin! Reject the temptation to be the “god” of your own life. Recognize that your individual sins are a manifestation of your fallen human nature. The healing begins when you have the courage to admit your sinfulness.

Step Two: Give your life back to Jesus Christ. Recognize the virtues that you must pursue to overcome the individual sins in your life. The healing continues when you reform your life and live according to gospel values.

Step Three: Recommit your life to Jesus Christ by confessing your sins and receiving the blessing of his Church in the Sacrament of Penance. The words of sacramental absolution are the blessing of forgiveness and spiritual healing.

GOD, THE FATHER OF MERCIES,
THROUGH THE DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF HIS SON
HAS RECONCILED THE WORLD TO HIMSELF
AND POURED OUT THE HOLY SPIRIT AMONG US
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS;
THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH,
MAY GOD GRANT 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. AMEN.

After Confession, start your new life with your assigned penance, and continue to lead a new life in Christ, even more devoutly than ever before. Then complete your celebration of Penance with your worthy reception of Holy Communion.

