

4. The Sacrament of Confession

In this Sacrament, we are called to disclose our conscience and reveal our sins in absolute confidentiality to the priest.



“Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbour caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law."

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1849

During his public life, Jesus both forgave sins and reintegrated sinners into the community.

The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission we look squarely at the sins we are guilty of, take responsibility for them, and thereby open ourselves again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible. *Catechism of the Catholic Church 1455*

Sin is the conscious thought, act or deed we do against ourselves, others, the community and our loving God. When we sin, we go against the commandments of God and alienate (turn away) ourselves from him. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation we re-orient ourselves (turn back) and reunite with God.

Before we enter the reconciliation space, we prepare ourselves by reflection or examining our conscience and think about how we hope to change our behaviour in the future. When we are ready, we begin our talk to God through his disciple (the priest). We confess (in all honesty) our sins, say what we will do to make amends and how truly sorry we are by saying the act of contrition. When we are done, we are given absolution (forgiveness) through the power of the Holy Spirit and are reunited with God.

Confession is the sacrament of the tenderness of God, his way of embracing us.

Pope Francis

Personal Reflection

Am I able to be brutally honest with myself when I am revealing my sinfulness?

Am I deeply sorry?

Do I acknowledge the value of the Act of Contrition or are they just words to be spoken?

Am I able to take this next step to freedom? How will I feel when I do?