

WHAT IS RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation (also known as Confession) is a Sacrament established by Jesus Christ because of His love for us in order that our sins may be forgiven so that we may be ‘reconciled’ to God, to ourselves and to the community.

Every time we sin, we hurt ourselves, other people, and our relationship with God. In Reconciliation, we acknowledge our sins before God and His Church. We express our sorrow in a meaningful way, receive the forgiveness of Christ and His Church, make reparation for what we have done and resolve to do better in the future.

The forgiveness of sins involves four parts: contrition, confession, penance, and absolution.

Contrition: a sincere sorrow for having offended God and the most important act of the penitent. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.

Confession: Confronting our sins in a profound way by admitting them aloud to God through the priest.

Penance: an important part of our healing process, the penance is given by the priest as the means for us to make reparation for our sins.

Absolution: the priest speaks the words by which “God, the Father of Mercies” reconciles us – sinners – to Himself through the suffering, Death, and Resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.



VIDEO CLIPS

A short clip (4.5 minutes) from” Outside da Box” demonstrates how one goes to confession <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib8pzvnnL20>

This short (6 minute) YouTube clip will help all to understand the gift that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtbpOERgMvk>

SOME PREPARATION REQUIRED

Confession is not difficult, but it does require some preparation.

Begin with prayer, placing yourself in the presence of God, your loving Father. Seeking healing and forgiveness through repentance and resolve to sin no more.

Review your life since your last confession, searching your memories for your thoughts, words, and actions that did not conform to God’s love, to His law, or to the laws of His Church. This is called an examination of conscience.

To begin an examination of conscience:

Find a place where you can be still and listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your heart.

Begin with a prayer asking for God’s help.

Review your life with the help of reflection on the 10 Commandments, the Beatitudes, Jesus’s command to “love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,” and to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22: 37-39).

Then, while that examination is fresh in your mind, go to a priest and participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

*Nothing can separate us from the Father's love.
Romans 8:39*

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Once you have made an examination of conscience you are prepared to celebrate Reconciliation. Here is the general format of the Sacrament. If you get nervous or forget a particular prayer or response, the priest will guide and help you with your celebration of the Sacrament.

- * The priest greets and blesses you. Make the Sign of the Cross and say: “Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was...” (Give the number of weeks, months, or years.)
- * Confess all of your sins to the priest. The priest will help you to make a good confession. If you

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR ADULTS

Recall your sins. Prayerfully ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God’s Commandments and the precepts of the Church. With Jesus’ help here are some things which may help:

Lord Jesus, open my mind and my heart to your Holy Spirit...

Show me where I am failing to love your heavenly Father.

Show me where I am failing to love you, failing to accept you as my Saviour, failing to seek you and yield to you as my Lord.

Show me where I am failing to love the Holy Spirit, failing to be open and to be led by Wisdom and Love.

Lord Jesus, show me where I am failing to love any of your brothers or sisters as you love me.

Show me where I am failing to love myself as you love me. Show me where I am putting myself before God.

Show me where I am seeking my own desires at the expense of a brother or sister.

Your power finds its strength in my weakness; without you I can do nothing. Amen.

For more information:
www.padiocese.ca/jubileeofmercy

are unsure about how to confess or feel uneasy, please let the priest know and ask him to help you. Answer his questions without hiding anything out of fear or shame. Place your trust in God, our merciful Father, who wants to forgive you.

- * Following your confession of sins say: “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”
- * The priest assigns you a penance and offers advice to help you to be a better Catholic.
- * Say an Act of Contrition expressing sorrow for your sins.
- * The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

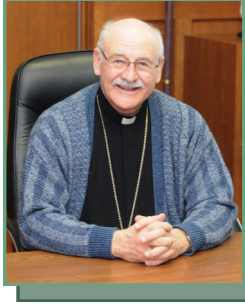
O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offended you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your Grace, to confess my sins,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

RECONCILIATION, ABORTION AND THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

Pope Francis’ words about the tragedy of abortion and a means to healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. From a letter dated Sept 1, 2015

One of the serious problems of our time is clearly the changed relationship with respect to life. A widespread and insensitive mentality has led to the loss of the proper personal and social sensitivity to welcome new life. ... I have met so many women who bear in their heart the scar of this agonizing and painful decision. What has happened is profoundly unjust; yet only understanding the truth of it can enable one not to lose hope. The forgiveness of God cannot be denied to one who has repented, especially when that person approaches the Sacrament of Confession with a sincere heart in order to obtain reconciliation with the Father. For this reason too, I have decided, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, to concede to all priests for the Jubilee Year the discretion to absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it. May priests fulfil this great task by expressing words of genuine welcome combined with a reflection that explains the gravity of the sin committed, besides indicating a path of authentic conversion by which to obtain the true and generous forgiveness of the Father who renews all with his presence.

The National Post published the story of one’s woman’s healing after an abortion through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Links to this story and Pope Francis’ Sept 1 letter can be found on the Diocesan Jubilee of Mercy webpage under the title Experiencing God’s Mercy .



It is hard to believe Lent is upon us. What a beautiful season for us to enter into as the Church continues its observance of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy!

Over the years, the Lenten season has not changed but perhaps our attitude towards it has. Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer remain the three ways of opening our hearts to this journey of faith. Annually, we continue to follow the path of the chosen people who thousands of years ago walked through the desert to the Promised Land. They were a pilgrimage people, but then so are we.

The celebration of Ash Wednesday is a very important beginning to our Lenten journey. "Repent and believe in the Gospel" are the words of the one marking our forehead

during this special Mass. We are all sinners. We all need conversion and we all need to experience the mercy of God and his forgiveness. What comes to mind when we think of mercy is forgiveness and love. If we accept conversion and if each of us change, it will change our communities. If we do it together, we will transform the world.

Reconciliation is one of the sacraments necessary to accompany us on our journey. Sin has often been seen as a breaking of a law. Even more profound, sin hinders the growth of our relationship with God, our relationship with our neighbour, and for that matter, it can hinder our personal growth. The root of our actions should be embedded in the commandment of love. To sin is a personal decision that leads us astray from love. Therefore, Reconciliation is God's mercy extended to us to lead us back on to the right path. Every law that we break has some effect on the lives of others. After all, our sins always have an effect on our families, our communities that we live in, and on the world.

We ask the Lord for forgiveness, and he forgives us, but we are not just spiritual beings. We are also human and a more tangible experience of this forgiveness is needed. Our confessor represents Christ in his merciful action of forgiveness but he also represents the people that we have offended and the offense to the life of the Church. Accordingly, in the name of the Church community, and in the name of the universal community, he absolves us of our sins. This absolution gifts us with release from our burden of sin. We feel a joyful liberation because the Lord has forgiven us and we feel more united with the world around us.

It is interesting to hear people say that they have not sinned, or that they are 'too old' to sin, as they follow the commandments of the Church. Yet, these same individuals may be harbouring grudges and may not be on speaking terms with other people, refusing to work toward forgiveness. With anger, fear, and hurt remaining, gossip and an attitude of 'they deserve what they get' is perpetuated.

Pope Francis **continues to encourage us to pray more and to be open to confession.** Confession helps us to live out our baptismal calling to the full. Our pastors have to make themselves more available for this sacrament as with regular confession, we are more alert and aware of ourselves, and of our relationships with others, especially the Lord. The more we let ourselves be seduced by the Lord, the more small matters count. This is a love relationship.

This year during Lent is Valentine's Day. Many couples plan activities on this special occasion of love. However, no matter if you are at home or out for dinner, share in the joyful liberation that God offers through forgiveness and love. Do not be afraid to say, "I am sorry!" and especially, "I love you." We all know that in married life, in any friendship or relationship, even the little things matter.

*Most Rev. Albert Thévenot M. Afr.
Bishop of Prince Albert*



Reconciliation: A doorway to the Father



**Roman Catholic
Diocese of
Prince Albert**

1415 - 4th Avenue West
Prince Albert, SK S6V 5H1
Phone: 306-922-4747

Today, most parishes have regular confession times before weekday Masses. The times of these opportunities for Reconciliation can often be found on a parish's website or in the parish's weekly bulletin. A person may also choose to call a parish priest and make an appointment with him to celebrate the Sacrament. Reconciliation may be celebrated face-to-face or anonymously with a screen between you and the priest. During this Jubilee of Mercy the Pope encourages everyone to come and experience the Mercy of God through the Sacrament of Mercy...Reconciliation.