

## The Sacrament of Penance

*The penitent enters the confessional and says:*

Bless me Father/Mother, for I have sinned.

*The penitent makes the Sign of the Cross while the priest says:*

The Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may truly confess your sins. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The penitent tells the priest how long it has been since their last Confession, then recites the number and kind of sins. The penitent concludes with a statement to the effect of:*

...for these and all my other sins, which I cannot presently remember, I am heartily sorry.

*The priest may ask some questions and give some advice. The priest will assign a penance. The priest then says:*

May almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. Amen.

*Holding his right hand over the penitent, the priest says:*

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins. Amen.

*Still holding his right hand over the penitent, the priest removes any impediments to the validity of the absolution he is about to give:*

May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve you; and by His authority I absolve you from every bond of excommunication, (*for priests: suspension,*) and interdict, in proportion to my power and your need.

*The priest recites the words of absolution while both the priest and the penitent make the Sign of the Cross. [A bishop makes the Sign of the Cross three times]:*

Therefore, I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Finally, the priest says a prayer for the remission of temporal punishment due for sins: May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, whatever good you have done, and evil you shall have endured, be to you for the remission of sins, increase of grace, and reward of eternal life. Amen.*

*Canonically, a priest does not have the right to remove every kind of bond of excommunication. That is reserved to the bishop. Therefore, the prayer is careful to say, "in proportion to my power". A priest must refrain from absolving difficult cases and refer the matter to a bishop.*