

those serious sins that they cannot at the present time confess in this way (*no. 33*).

Unless prevented by a moral impossibility, the penitent who has received general absolution is to make an individual confession within a year and before receiving general absolution again (*no. 34*).

### Customs for Reconciliation At St. Cecilia Catholic Church

There are normally three communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation according to the Second Form during the Church's liturgical calendar: one during the Advent Season, one during the Lenten Season, and one at the time of First Reconciliation. The community, especially family and friends, are invited to celebrate Reconciliation with those celebrating the sacrament for the first time. This is usually scheduled during the Fall.

Individual celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation according to the First Form is regularly scheduled on most Saturdays and is available at other times by appointment with the office.

The mystery of reconciliation is the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the mystery of the blood of Jesus shed for the forgiveness of sins, the mystery of the God who so loved the world that Jesus was sent so that those who believe might have life.

# Roman Catholic Reconciliation Guidelines And Customs

St. Cecilia Catholic Church  
2159 Highway 195  
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# RECONCILIATION

*Jesus, however, not only exhorted people to repentance so that they would abandon their sins and turn wholeheartedly to the Lord, but welcoming sinners, he actually reconciled them with the Father*  
....

*In the Sacrament of Penance the faithful "obtain from God's mercy pardon for having offended him and at the same time reconciliation with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, example, and prayer seeks their conversion."*

Rite of Penance: Introduction, nn. 1, 4, [quoting Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, n. 11]

*This booklet has been prepared by parishioners of St. Cecilia Catholic Church to help our parish community review the Church's vision, understanding, teaching, and discipline of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the local Customs for celebrating the Sacrament at St. Cecilia Catholic Church.*

are available to hear individual confessions properly within a reasonable time, with the result that through no fault of their own the faithful would be forced to be for a long time (one month) without the grace of the sacrament or without Communion. The need in question is not regarded as sufficient when the non-availability of confessors is based solely on there being a large number of penitents such as may be the case at some great festival or pilgrimage (Cf. CIC, canons 960 and 961, paragraph 1 #31).

It is for the diocesan bishop, and him alone, to judge whether and when the conditions for general absolution are verified in his diocese (Canon 961, 2).

In judging whether the conditions for general absolution are verified in his diocese, the diocesan bishop, in light of the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the episcopal conference, can determine cases of grave necessity (Canon 961, 2).

In order to receive validly general sacramental absolution, the penitent must have the usual proper disposition to receive the sacrament: repentance for sins, intention of refraining from committing them again, and resolution to rectify scandalous injury they have caused. In addition to these dispositions, penitents must be resolved to confess in due time each of

The opportunity for individual confession and absolution is to be scheduled in every parish on a weekly basis. There should be a time separation between the Sacrament of Reconciliation and mass.

Communal reconciliation services are encouraged especially during Advent and Lent in each parish. Priests from other parishes are to be invited so that the opportunity for individual confession and absolution is provided.

Priests should be vested in alb and stole.

The rite provides suggested formats of communal celebration of Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution.

#### **THE RECONCILIATION OF SEVERAL PENITENTS WITH GENERAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

The greatest care must be taken to provide the faithful with an adequate catechesis so that they may understand the concept and extraordinary condition of general absolution.

Absolution without prior individual confession cannot be given collectively to a number of penitents unless:

a. The danger of death is eminent and there is no time for a priest to hear the confessions of the individual penitents;

b. A serious need is present, namely, given the number of penitents, not enough confessors

## **Prelude**

The Catholic Church treasures the Sacrament of Penance. Many parishes offer a communal celebration of penance, especially during Advent and Lent. But private reconciliation is usually available every week of the year. If you'd like to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, here's what to do:

◊ Prepare. Prayerfully recall your sins. Some will be specific actions. Some represent a more general pattern of behavior.

◊ Go to the priest. Visit when he's in the Reconciliation Room (Confessional) at your parish or ask for an appointment. You may either kneel anonymously behind a screen or sit in a chair where you may speak face to face.

◊ Be welcomed. You and the priest may greet each other. Make the Sign of the Cross. He may urge you to have confidence in God. You may indicate the interval since your last confession or anything else that will help. Just use common sense. Either you or the priest may read from Scripture.

◊ Confess your sins. Some penitents begin with a formula like "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," but you don't have to. This is not indicated in the rite. Let the priest know your sins. You may discuss the sins you confess so the priest can give you the best counsel.

◊ Receive a penance. The priest will recommend some action after you leave to indicate to God the sincerity in your heart. Usually he suggests prayer or self-denial. If it sounds difficult, let him know.

◊ Pray for forgiveness. The priest may invite you to say a prayer of sorrow aloud. If you remember the Act of Contrition, you may use it. But you may also speak simply from your heart.

◊ Receive absolution. This is the best part. The priest proclaims absolution, and God forgives your sins.

◊ Conclude. The priest may say, "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good." If so, answer, "His mercy endures for ever" (Rite of Penance, 47). Or he may conclude informally. ◊ Change! Go forth, and with God's help, begin to live a new life of freedom from the slavery of sin!

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## Order of Reconciliation

### INTRODUCTION

The Church is solicitous in calling the faithful to continued conversion and renewal. It desires that the baptized who have sinned should acknowledge their sins against God and their neighbor and have heartfelt repentance for them (*Rite of Penance: Decree, 1973*).

In the Sacrament of Penance, God achieves and seals reconciliation brought about in Christ at

his initiative through a celebration of forgiveness on a human level (*Commentary on the Rite of Penance*).

In the renewed *Rite of Penance*, December, 1973, three forms of celebrations are outlined.

The first form, **Reconciliation of Individual Penitents**, is the normal and ordinary way of celebrating the sacrament, and it should not fall into disuse or be neglected.

The second form, **Reconciliation of a Number of Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution**, helps to give greater emphasis to the community aspects of the sacrament.

The third form, **Reconciliation of a Number of Penitents with General Confession and Absolution**, is exceptional in character. It is therefore regulated by a special discipline (*Apostolic Exhortation, RECONCILIATIO ET PAENITENTIA, 1984, cf. 32*).

### ORDINARY CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

Reconciliation is to be celebrated in the language of the people.

Every church and mission is to have the facility to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation offering the penitent a choice between face-to-face encounter or behind a screen. A reconciliation chapel is to be simple and austere, furnished with a simple cross, table and bible (*EACW #81*).