



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF WORSHIP

The Revised *Order of Penance* (2023)

The disciple of Christ who, after sinning, is moved by the Holy Spirit and comes to the Sacrament of Penance, should, above all, turn to God with all his (her) heart. This inner conversion of heart, which involves contrition for sin and the resolution to lead a new life, is expressed by confession made to the Church, by due satisfaction (an act of penance), and also by amendment of life. God truly grants forgiveness of sins through the Church, which works by the ministry of Priests. (OP, no. 6)

Even though the translation of certain prayers and the ritual book for the *Order of Penance* have changed, the order of celebration is largely the same.

I. The Reception of the Penitent

The penitent enters the Reconciliation Chapel and, after being welcomed by the priest, begins, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The priest and penitent sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross.

The priest may also invite the penitent to trust in God: “May God, who has shone his light in our hearts grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy.” The penitent replies, “Amen.”

II. The Reading of the Word of God (Optional)

The priest may read or recite from memory a text of Sacred Scripture in which God’s mercy is announced and people are called to conversion. He may also opt to invite the penitent to do this or to reflect on Scripture as part of the examination of conscience before celebrating the sacrament.

III. The Confession of Sins and the Acceptance of Satisfaction

Next, the penitent confesses his (her) sins, after first saying, where it is the custom, a general formula for confession (e.g. “I confess to almighty God...”). This is often done as part of communal penance services prior to individual celebration of penance.

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If necessary, the priest assists the penitent in making a confession, offering counsel, and urging them to have contrition for their faults, reminding them that through the Sacrament of Penance, a Christian, by dying and rising with Christ, is renewed in the Paschal Mystery.

The priest then proposes a penance that the penitent accepts to make satisfaction for sin and to amend his (her) life.

IV. The Prayer of the Penitent (Act of Contrition) and the Absolution

The priest then invites the penitent to express his (her) contrition, which the penitent may do in these or similar words:

*O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments,
but most of all because they offend you, my God,
who are all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,
to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.*

This is a new addition to the *Order of Penance*, particular to the United States, but this is one of ten different options presented in the ritual text. As noted, these *or similar words* may be used.

Then, the priest, extending his hands over the penitent's head, says:

*God, the Father of mercies, through the Death and Resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit 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.*

(Please note that this translation has changed slightly.)

V. Proclamation of Praise of God and the Dismissal of the Penitent

The priest continues: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good."
And the penitent concludes: "For his mercy endures for ever."

The priest then dismisses the penitent, saying:
"The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace."