

What happens during Reconciliation?

- The priest and you make the Sign of the Cross: ***“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”***
- You are invited to say what is on your conscience.
 - * This is not a list of sins, as God already knows what you are thinking. Perhaps instead name your three sins which most concern you.
- Next the priest gives you a penance to do later:
 - * This task, which is related to what you have confessed, should help restore your relationship with anyone you have hurt, and with God.
- You are invited to say an ‘Act of Contrition’ (to say sorry for your sins and ask God to help you not sin again). You can use your own words or a formal prayer e.g.: ***“O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again, Amen”***
- The priest puts his hand over your head and says the Prayer of Absolution, which ends: ***“I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”***
- You can now leave.
- Afterwards, try to complete your penance as soon as you can: it will help you feel forgiven!

Going to Reconciliation

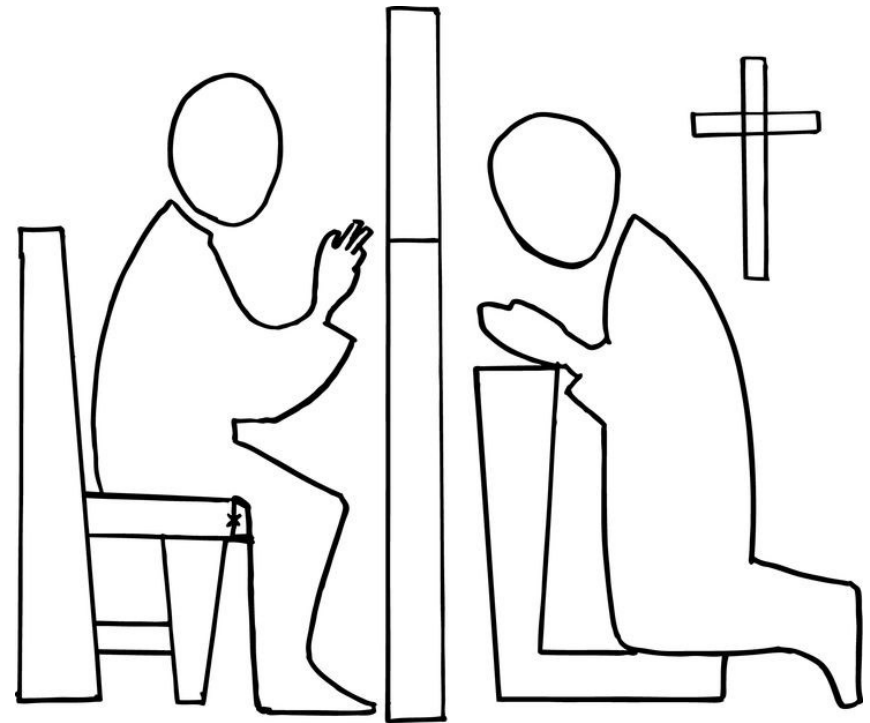


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Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION

What is Reconciliation (for)?

During our life we all have times when we feel close to God, and times when we do not. We might feel cut off from God, maybe because of something we have done (or not done) that we know was not what God wanted. God always calls us back in love.

One way we can come back to God is through the Sacrament of 'Reconciliation' ('Confession' or 'Penance'). This is an opportunity to experience God's forgiveness through a structured conversation with God and a priest. The process helps a person 'to recognise and name my sins and then to know that God has forgiven me, so that I can start afresh'.

You might feel nervous about going to Reconciliation, especially if you have not been for a long time, but try not to let that stop you. Priests should encourage and support people through the process, and priests are not allowed to repeat what they hear "in the Confessional". They should *"grant forgiveness to those who ask for it and help those who feel fear to confidently approach the sacrament of healing and joy."*

(Pope Francis, *Celebration of Reconciliation*, 8th March 2024.)

How do I prepare?

Before you meet with the priest in the confessional, spend some time thinking about the following:

- How do I let Jesus guide me in my life?
- Do I keep Jesus out of certain aspects of my life?
- What gets in the way of my relationship with God?
- When have I chosen to do something that I knew was the wrong thing to do?
- When have I chosen not to do something that I knew I should have done?
- To aid this, you could read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7:
"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
- As you read this passage, replace the words 'love' and 'it' with your name. Then ask yourself: 'Am I patient, am I kind...?'
- Celebrate the things about yourself which you like as well as noting what things you want to change.