

The Rite of the Reconciliation of Penitents

(aka “Confession,” aka “Absolution”)

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What is confession?

Distinguishing between Canterbury, Rome...and Hollywood

A sacrament?

From the Catechism:

124. Are there other sacraments?

Other rites and institutions commonly called sacraments include confirmation, ordination, marriage, absolution, and the anointing of the sick. These are sometimes called “sacraments of the Church.”

125. How do these differ from the sacraments of the Gospel?

They were not ordained by Christ as necessary to salvation, but arose from the practices of the apostles and the Early Church, or were blessed by God in Scripture. God clearly uses them as means of grace.

Pastoral care?

The Gospel

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9)

Rite of healing

Absolution

From the Catechism:

149. What is absolution?

In absolution, a priest, acting under God’s authority, pronounces God’s forgiveness in response to repentance and confession of sin. (2 Samuel 12:1–13; Proverbs 28:13; John 20:22–23; James 5:15–16)

151. What is necessary to receive the grace of absolution?

Repentance, in which I intend to resist further sin, accept responsibility for my actions, and endeavor to repair damage I have caused; and **faith**, by which I thankfully receive God’s forgiveness.

Who confesses? And is it necessary?

“All may, none must, some should” | Confession to a minister: no obligation, only benefits
To a minister?

John 20:23 - ἂν τινων ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφείωνται αὐτοῖς· ἂν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται.

JMA:

If you forgive (/send away) the sins of any, they are forgiven (/sent away), if you retain (/keep) any, they are retained (/kept).

All sins that you forgive are sins that are forgiven.

Does not entail: All sins must be confessed to a minister in order to be forgiven

From the Exhortation:

First, examine your life by the rule of God’s commandments. Wherever you have offended, either by thought, word, or deed, confess your sins to Almighty God, with the full intention to amend your life. Be ready to make restitution for all injuries and wrongs you have done to others; and also be ready to forgive others who have offended you...If you have come here today with a troubled conscience, and you need help and counsel, come to me, or to some other Priest, and confess your sins, that you may receive godly counsel, direction, and absolution. To do so will both satisfy your conscience and remove any scruples or doubt.

How to confess Pg. 223 in the 2019 *Book of Common Prayer*

Preparation

“examine your life by the rule of God’s commandments”

Breaking the Decalogue - no other gods, no idols, not taking the Lord’s name in vain, keep the Sabbath, honor parents, no murder, no adultery, no stealing, no lying, no coveting

Committing the “Seven capital vices” - gluttony, lust, greed, envy, wrath, sloth, pride

Omitting the “Seven capital virtues” - faith, hope, love, prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude

[sidebar] The “seal” of the confessional

Canon XXXI, Section 3: The Seal of Confession is absolute and inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a Confessor to betray in any way a penitent in word or in any manner or for any reason.

When to confess

“Life” confession - like it sounds (...make an appointment for this!)

“Regular” confession - weekly in the liturgy, seasonally as offered [Advent, Lent, Trinity]

“Occasional” confession - occasioned by a particular sin...can be as quick as a few minutes

What to do after

“repair damage I have caused”

Protestant penance:

1) Repairing damage, 2) Giving thanks, 3) Building better habits