

# Confession and Forgiveness

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CCC	Catechism of Catholic Church
1441	<b>Only God forgives sin</b>
	Only God forgives sins. <sup>39</sup> Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>40</sup> Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name. <sup>41</sup>
	<b>How God does this through the church</b>
1442	Christ has willed that in her prayer and life and action his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood. But he entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the "ministry of reconciliation." <sup>42</sup> The apostle is sent out "on behalf of Christ" with "God making his appeal" through him and pleading: "Be reconciled to God." <sup>43</sup>
	<b>How Confession has changed over the centuries</b>
1447	Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably. During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had committed particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry, murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years, before receiving reconciliation. To this "order of penitents" (which concerned only certain grave sins), one was only rarely admitted and in certain regions only once in a lifetime. During the seventh century Irish missionaries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental Europe the "private" practice of penance, which does not require public and prolonged completion of penitential works before reconciliation with the Church. From that time on, the sacrament has been performed in secret between penitent and priest. This new practice envisioned the possibility of repetition and so opened the way to a regular frequenting of this sacrament. It allowed the forgiveness of grave sins and venial sins to be integrated into one sacramental celebration. In its main lines this is the form of penance that the Church has practiced down to our day.
	<i>Note: Old way of Confessions =&gt; open and public. So did the practice of penance.</i>

1449	<b>The formula of Absolution expresses and the essential elements of the Sacrament</b>
	The formula of absolution used in the Latin Church expresses the essential elements of this sacrament: the Father of mercies is the source of all forgiveness. He effects the reconciliation of sinners through the Passover of his Son and the gift of his Spirit, through the prayer and ministry of the Church: God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give 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. <sup>48</sup>
	<b>The Act of the Penitent</b>
1451	<b>Contrition</b>
	Among the penitent's acts contrition occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again." <sup>50</sup>
	<b>Perfect Contrition; what is it?</b>
1452	When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible. <sup>51</sup>
1453	The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance. <sup>52</sup>
	<b>Examination of Conscience – Word of God</b>
1454	The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an examination of conscience made in the light of the Word of God. The passages best suited to this can be found in the Ten Commandments, moral catechesis of the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic teachings. <sup>53</sup>
	<b>An abuse of the sacrament of Confession.</b>
1456	Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins

	<p>sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly."<sup>54</sup></p> <p>When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, "for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."<sup>55</sup></p>
	<b>Venial sins</b>
1458	<p>Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.<sup>59</sup> Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful:<sup>60</sup> Whoever confesses his sins . . . is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear "man" - this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner" - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made .... When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. the beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.<sup>61</sup></p>
	<b>3 Acts of the Penitent</b>
1491	<p>The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. the penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation.</p>
	<b>Repentance (Contrition)</b>
1492	<p>Repentance (also called contrition) must be inspired by motives that arise from faith. If repentance rises from love of charity for God, it is called "perfect" contrition; if it is founded on other motives, it is called "imperfect."</p>
	<b>Spiritual Effects (Benefits of Confession)</b>
1496	<p>The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;</li> <li>- reconciliation with the Church;</li> <li>- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;</li> <li>- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;</li> </ul>

	- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; - an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

**God's attitude towards sinners**

		<b>What does God do for the lost, strayed, injured and weak?</b>
Ezekiel	34: 15-16	<sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.
		<b>What does God do when we are dead in mortal sin?</b>
Luke	15:11-24	<sup>11</sup> Then Jesus <sup>[a]</sup> said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup> When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> He would gladly have filled himself with <sup>[b]</sup> the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" <sup>20</sup> So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>[c]</sup> <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.
		<b>What does God do for his sheep that are lost?</b>
Luke	15:4-7	<sup>4</sup> "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after

		the one that is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' <sup>7</sup> Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
Ezekiel	34-11-12	<sup>11</sup> For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

### God's invitation to sinners

		What God will do?
Jeremiah	31:34	<sup>34</sup> No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.
Isaiah	43:25-26	<sup>25</sup> I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. <sup>26</sup> Accuse me, let us go to trial; set forth your case, so that you may be proved right.
Isaiah	1:18	Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
Hebrews	4:15-16	<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested <sup>[a]</sup> as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Isaiah	55:6-7	<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; <sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
Matthew	11:28-30	<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
John	6:37	<sup>37</sup> Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away;