

THE REVISED ORDER OF **P E N A N C E**

INFORMATION ON THE RECENT REVISIONS OF THE TEXT
AND PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

DIOCESE OF OAKLAND



The Order of Penance (*formerly the Rite of Penance*) is a revision of the first English translation of the 1973 Latin edition.

The revision only affects the translation and not the structure of the rites. Its first use date is Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023.

Its mandatory use date is the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16, 2023, after this date no other English translation may be used.

"In him we live and move
and have our being"
(Acts 17:28)

Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God.

It is a holy moment in which we place ourselves in his presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The Sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God.

In this Resource:

- Overview of the Revisions
- Pastoral Considerations

THE REVISED ORDER OF P E N A N C E

The Revised Order of Penance

In 2021, the bishops of the United States approved a revised English translation of the Order of Penance, and in April 2022 the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments granted the *recognitio* of the text.

What Has NOT Changed

- The structure of the celebration of the sacrament, in all its forms, has not changed.

The order of the text has not changed. It remains:

- Chapter I: The Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents
- Chapter II: The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution
- Chapter III: The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution
- Chapter IV: Various Texts to Be Used in the Celebration of Reconciliation

What Is New

- The words and language of the ritual text are different. Following the same practices used in the translations of the revised Roman Missal, the Order of Confirmation, etc., the language is closer in style and content to the Latin original.

Sacramental Considerations

“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**...and the intention to make **reparation** and do works of reparation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC]*, 1491).

The Sacrament of Penance **is both an act of Christ and an act of the Church**. Christ accomplishes the work of reconciliation.

- Christ is the one who established the sacrament (see Mt 16:19 and Jn 20:19, 22-23);
- Christ is present in it;
- and Christ acts through it by bestowing the grace he merited for sinners through the saving work of his Paschal Mystery.

The whole Church is involved in the ministry of reconciliation. The Sacrament of Penance is celebrated by the Church, it occurs in the context of the Church and, consequently, the effect of reconciliation is experienced through and by the whole Church.

Accordingly, the Church acts as a priestly people whose members gather together, pray to God for his mercy, listen to the proclamation of the Word of God, examine their consciences, confess their sins, go to individual confession and receive absolution, praise God, and are sent forth.

Liturgical Considerations For Reflection

It is through the liturgical action of the Sacrament of Penance that we receive a “new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification” and are restored to the state of innocence we first experienced at baptism when we turned away from Satan, sin, and death and toward Christ, light, and life.

(CCC, 1446 and 1480).

Accordingly, the nature and effects of the Sacrament are more clearly expressed when it is celebrated according to the prescribed rites:

- the Reception of the Penitent
- the Reading of the Word of God (*optional*)
- the Confession of Sins and the
- Acceptance of Satisfaction
- the Prayer of the Penitent and the Absolution
- the Proclamation of Praise of God and the Dismissal

(Order of Penance, “Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents,” 41-47)

“To neglect the fullness of the liturgy of penance, even while observing the laws for valid celebration, still communicates grace, but it does not ‘most effectively dispose the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner.’”

(Sacrosanctum Concilium, 59)

The concern of the minister should always be not only that grace is given, but also that the recipient is disposed to the grace given, and that this grace is fully expressed and most fruitfully received”

(USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, Newsletter, Volume LVIII, September 2022).

Lord Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind,
healed the sick, forgave the sinful woman,
and, after his denial, confirmed Peter in your love, hear my plea:
forgive all my sins, renew me in your love,
and grant that I may live in perfect communion with my brothers and sisters
and so proclaim your salvation to all. Amen.

Prayer of the Penitent # 6

What Is New:

Here are a few revisions to the texts/ritual book:

- The title has changed from the *Rite of Penance* to the **Order of Penance**
- There are 11 examples of the **Prayers of the Penitent** provided
- ***Appendix II: Examples of Penitential Celebration*** is expanded with several examples and seasonal suggestions.
- These 6 Sample Services are an excellent resource for parish celebrations of *Form II: Communal Celebrations of Several Penitents with individual confession and absolution.*

The most significant revision involves the prayer of absolution.

Prayer of Absolution:

Current Text

God, the Father of mercies,
Through the Death
and 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.

Amen.

** Note the 3 revisions in the wording of the prayer.*

Revised Text

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:

- The **essential element** of the formula of absolution **has not changed**.
- At this time, a new Spanish translation of the *Ritual de la Penitencia* is NOT available in the US.

Pastoral Considerations

The introduction of the revised Order of Penance provides an occasion for a renewed study of the *prænotanda* by priests and for an increased use of the rich options available in the text for the celebration of the sacrament.

There are 11 options for the **Prayer of the Penitent** available in the revised text. In addition to the ten options already provided for the penitent's Act of Contrition, the Holy See confirmed the addition of a traditional version of the prayer, well-known in the United States:

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.

Of course, penitents are not limited to the options provided in the Order of Penance, and are free to express their sorrow with other prayers or even in their own words.

Other Considerations:

- Clean out confessionals and arrange them to be spaces that are worthy of the celebration of this sacrament.
- Provide resources for those going to confession: a print-out of the various **Prayers of the Penitent**, guides on “how to” go to confession, pamphlets for further assistance (e.g., Project Rachael, Third Option, etc.), **sample penances** (e.g., prayers, scripture readings, etc.), etc.
- Restructure “Penance Services” using The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.

For more information visit:

- <https://fdlc.org/penance/> (A webinar on the Revised Order of Penance is available from the FDLC website)
- <https://catholicdos.org/order-of-penance>
- <http://pastoralliturgy.org/resources/TheRevisedOrderofPenance.pdf>

Contact the Office of Worship of the Diocese of Oakland
for implementation resources or additional information.