

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Who originated the Ministry of the Catholic Church?

- **Christ instituted the Ministry of the Apostles as told in the Gospels.**
- **The Church has continued the Ministry of Christ and his Apostles.**

When did the Church begin the Ministry of Christ and his Apostles?

- **Pentecost is the birthday of the Church when the Holy Spirit empowered the Church to minister in the name of Christ and his Apostles.**
- **From its apostolic origins the Church has continued to develop its Sacred Tradition through both oral teaching and written Scriptures.**

Who represents Christ and his Apostles in the Ministry of the Church today?

- **Priests and Bishops are ordained to act in the person of Christ the Head of his Body by ministering to the Members of his Body, the Church.**
- **The whole Church works together with Christ to build up the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit and united to God, our Father.**

How do we in the Church maintain our Catholic identity through ministry?

- **The Liturgy of the Mass, the seven Sacraments, and the daily Prayer of the Hours is the public work of the Church that identifies us as Catholics.**
- **The Mass, the Sacraments and the Prayer of the Hours preserve our Catholic ecclesial communion that binds us together as a church.**

What is the relationship between the Church and all of the Sacraments?

- **The Church embodies the mysteries of our faith in art, architecture, music and sacraments, which are signs and symbols of what we believe.**
- **Sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace, signs instituted by Christ that point to our human encounter with Christ in all the Sacraments.**
- **Just as the divine Son of God is incarnated as human, so the Sacraments are incarnated signs of Christ living among us in sensible, palpable ways.**

What does the written tradition of the Scriptures tell us about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- **“Be reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:20)**
- **“Be reconciled with your brother.” (Mt. 5:24)**
- **“If we say, ‘We are without sin,’ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 Jn. 1:8)**

Who forgives sin?

- **“God alone can forgive sins.” (Mk. 2:7)**
- **“The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth.” (Mk. 2:10)**
- **Jesus said to them, “‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’ ” (Jn. 20:22-23)**

- **Jesus says to Peter:**
 “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:19)
- **Jesus speaks to the Church:**
 “Amen, I say to you to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 18:18)
- **“All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation. Entrusting to us the message of reconciliation, we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.” (2 Cor. 5:18-20)**
- **“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (Jas. 5:16)**

The seven Sacraments of the Church incarnate the physical presence of Christ in the world and make his presence real in the assembly of the Church.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation cleanses us of sin after Baptism and heals our relationship to God, to others, and to ourselves in mutual forgiveness.

- **“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” (Mt. 6:12)**
- **“We must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” (Lk. 15:32)**

Why confess your sins to a priest?

- **If a man or woman answers charges before a Judge in civil court for breaking the law by using illegal substances, their dialogue is instructive:**
- **“I took drugs myself and I didn’t hurt anybody else.” “Oh, but you did.”**
- **“I asked God to forgive me and God did.” “Good, but you must do more.”**
- **“You weakened the moral fiber of all society by your crime.” “You owe.”**
- **Unlike a judge, the priest forgives sin in the name of Christ and the Church**

What does the oral tradition of the Church tell us about the Sacrament of Reconciliation after Baptism has already forgiven all of our sins once?

- **Need of ongoing conversion of heart and radical reorientation of our lives.**
- **Sin wounds our individual souls and the soul of the Church community.**
- **Sin damages our communion with God and our communion with Church.**
- **Sin can break, alienate and exclude us from the community of the Church.**
- **Sacrament of Reconciliation repairs, restores, and heals our communion.**
- **Sacrament of Reconciliation reintegrates us into our ecclesial communion.**
- **Sacrament of Reconciliation strengthens our Communion of the Saints.**
- **We are all incomplete without the Community of God and His Church.**
- **The priest is not the Master of God’s forgiveness, but he is its Servant.**