The Catholic Community of Gloucester & Rockport

Holy Family Parish – Our Lady of Good Voyage Parish

The Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation
A Guide for Making a Good Confession

As sinners, we acknowledge our faults and failures. We also believe deeply in God's boundless mercy and limitless love for us. The Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation (Confession) offers each of us an opportunity to reconcile ourselves with both God and the Church. The sacrament is comprised of five elements: sorrow for one's sins, confession of those sins to a priest, a prayer of contrition, absolution by a priest, and an act of penance.

Each of us is called to a life of holiness. But in our hearts, each of us knows that we make mistakes that offend God and hurt others. These sins come between or separate us from God, the Church, our families, friends, and neighbors. So Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation (Confession) in order that we may be reconciled to God and the community of believers through the ministry of the priest, who by virtue of ordination is configured to act in the name of Christ and the Church.

The Catholic Church teaches that each of us should confess our sins at least once per year. However, a faithful disciple who regularly examines his or her conscience may find it necessary to participate in the sacrament more often. In addition, the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation prepares us to fully participate in the sacrifice of the Mass by receiving the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.

Making a Good Confession

- Before Confession, examine your conscience and pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to acknowledge and take ownership of your sins.
- In the presence of a priest, begin by making the sign of the cross and say: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (weeks, months, years) since my last confession."
- Confess your sins to the best of your ability. If you do not know how to confess your sins, ask the priest to help you.
- After you have confessed your sins, the priest may offer some advice and assign some act of penance. In addition, the priest may ask you to pray an Act of Contrition (see below).
- Act of Contrition: My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all else. I firmly intend, with the help of your grace, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.
- At this point, the priest will absolve you (which means to set you free) from your sins by praying the Prayer of Absolution (see below).
- Prayer of Absolution: "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.
- After Confession, pray or perform your penance as soon as possible. Please pray also for the priest who heard your confession.

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Catholic Community of Gloucester & Rockport will celebrate the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation (Confession) according to the following schedule:

- Saint Ann Church — Saturdays 3:00pm-3:30pm
- Our Lady of Good Voyage Church — Monthly Mercy Fridays (TBA)
- By Appointment

If you have questions or would like more information about the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation, please see one of our priests; contact Father Jim at 978-281-4820 or frjim@ccgronline.com; visit our website at ccgronline.com; or refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1422-1498).