

The reconciliation of a penitent

1 Preparation for the act of confession is usually a pastoral dialog between priest and penitent, which in turn may be related to confession according to the Lutheran Catechism.

2 The penitent may kneel at the confession and absolution of sin.

3 Scriptural readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible

1 | Introductory rite

P | In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray together.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

PSALM 139, 1-4; 23 – 24

2 | The confession

P | Confess your sins to God.

The penitent may use one of the following forms of confession:

1 I confess ... [etc.]

The penitent confesses in their own words.

2. Lord, holy God, your word tells me that I am a sinner, lost without your grace. Lord, this truth is often distant and unreal to me. Give me the will and courage to let myself be revealed by your word. You have created me, and I am accountable to you with my life. Your will should govern my thoughts and my actions, but my desires often supersede your will.

You have said that I should love my fellow human beings, but my attitudes are often characterised by indifference, coldness, and criticism.

You demand truth and openness in my life, but I shy away from these requirements. Yet I know that I may receive your salvation only when my life is defenselessly open to you.

Lord, lead me away from easy solutions. Forgive me my sins for the sake of Jesus Christ. Grant me that holy restlessness that drives me anew to you, so that I might live in true security and trust.

3 Holy God, merciful Father, I am but a poor, unfortunate person who shares in the sin and guilt of humankind. I confess to you, righteous God, that I have sinned against you in many ways.

I have not loved you above all things, nor my neighbour as myself. I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in your holy commandments. If you were to judge me by what I have done, I deserve to be rejected by you.

Dear heavenly Father, you have nevertheless promised that you will receive in grace all who turn to you, trusting in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that they might take refuge in your great mercy. You would forgive them all their sins and never again impute their sins to them. I put my trust in this and ask for forgiveness for all my sin, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

4 Dear Lord God, I have shown disrespect towards you many times in my thoughts, words, and deeds, and I have no defence. But I believe in your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered death to save me, and I ask you for his sake: forgive, yes, forgive me all my sins.

Grant me that through your Holy Spirit I may believe your word that my sins are forgiven, and turn me away from sin and let your holy and good will reign in my life. Lord, have mercy on me.

3 | Statement on the forgiveness of sin

P | May God grant you grace and strengthen your faith.

The risen Lord said to his disciples:

“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

JOH 20: 22- 23

4 | The absolution of sin

The priest lays a hand on the head of the penitent

P | According to the word and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I promise you gracious forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Spirit. He who initiated good work in you will complete it – until the day of Jesus Christ.

Peace be with you.

5 | Concluding rite

The priest and penitent may thereafter read aloud the following psalm (the text may be read together, or alternate verses may be read by priest and penitent):

Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—

who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;

he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **Ps 103, 1-4; 8-12**

The Lord's prayer may be then said together.

Either

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

or

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.