

## When you are ready to make your Confession ...

The Priest welcomes you and together you make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

You may say, **Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.** And indicate when your last Confession was. Do not worry if it has been a while.

Then, you confess your sins. Do not be afraid. The priest may offer you counsel and talk to you to help you. He will give you a penance to perform following your Confession. Penance can be prayer or actions or both that will help you to repair your relationships and be strengthened.

You then say an Act of Contrition, to show how sorry you are, using your own words, or a prayer you know, or using this prayer:

**Lord God,  
in your goodness have mercy on me:  
Do not look on my sins, but take away all my guilt.  
Create in me a clean heart,  
and renew within me an upright spirit.** (from the *Rite of Penance*)

Now the priest will speak the words of Absolution.

...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.

You respond: **Amen.**

The priest may say: The Lord has freed you from your sins.  
Go in peace.

You respond: **Thanks be to God!**

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His mercy endures for ever.*

# The Door is Always Open



*The Door of Mercy  
Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King, Hamilton*

Pope Francis invites all people “to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; ... whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms.

How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost!”

Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 3

## Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

## To Meditate Upon ...

### *Scripture Speaks to us of God's Mercy*

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.  
Lord, hear my voice!” *Psalm 130: 1-2*

**Reflection:** *Be courageous.*

*The Lord is ready to hear whatever you need to say.*

“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? 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.” *Luke 15: 4,7*

**Reflection:** *How is the one sheep lost?*

*Does the sheep know he is lost?*

*Does he know the shepherd is looking for him?*

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *Romans 8: 38-39*

**Reflection:** *Pope Francis assures us that Jesus  
is the face of the Father's mercy.*

*St. Paul tells us nothing can separate us from the love of God .*

*We turn to the face of mercy and love,  
when we turn to him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation .*

## As you prepare ...

The Church speaks about an “Examination of Conscience” before the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

As you come to celebrate the forgiving love of the Father, and before confessing your sins, take time to review your life in relationship to self, others, God, and the world.

This is a way to recall your sins, to become aware of patterns in your behaviour that are a problem and to be honest with yourself about what you need to confess.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, suggests we reflect on the following in this Year of Mercy:

“At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives.” *(MV 2)*

“The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love as that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child.” *(MV 6)*

Some people find reviewing the Ten Commandments to be a helpful way to examine their conscience.

Some people review their day, their week, this month, the past year, and ask themselves, “Where have I been unloving?”

Your parish church may have an aid to assist you in examining your conscience.

