



INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. The confession made by a penitent is protected from disclosure. The pastor is obligated to respect at all times the confidential nature of a confession.

2. The pastor greets the penitent. When the penitent has knelt, the pastor begins:

P Are you prepared to make your confession?

R I am.

The pastor and penitent say the psalm together.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise.

Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,
but you take no delight in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin. (Ps. 51:16-18, 1-2)

P You have come to make confession before God. In Christ you are free to confess before me, a pastor in his Church, the sins of which you are aware and the sins which trouble you.

R I confess before God that I am guilty of many sins.
Especially I confess before you that . . .

3. The penitent confesses those sins which are known and those which disturb or grieve him/her.

For all this I am sorry and I pray for forgiveness. I want to do better.

4. The pastor may then engage the penitent in pastoral conversation, offering admonition and comfort from the Holy Scriptures. Then they say together:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit. (Ps. 51:1, 11-13)

5. The pastor stands and faces the penitent or remains seated and turns toward the penitent.

P Do you believe that the word of forgiveness I speak to you comes from God himself?

R Yes, I believe.

6. The pastor lays both hands on the head of the penitent.

P God is merciful and blesses you. By the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, a called and ordained servant of the Word, forgive you your sins in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R Amen

7. The penitent may pray silently in thanksgiving, or may pray together with the pastor:

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

He will not always accuse us,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father cares for his children,
so does the Lord care for those who fear him. (Ps. 103:8-13)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen

P Blessed are those whose sins have been forgiven,
whose evil deeds have been forgotten.
Rejoice in the Lord, and go in peace.

8. The penitent stands and may exchange the peace with the pastor.