

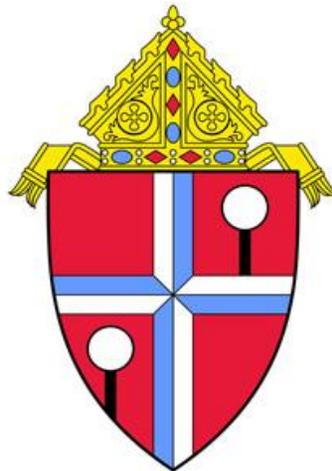
## What Is Reconciliation?

“To reconcile” literally means to bring back together, to be reconnected. Jesus wants each of us to be free, full of joy in being reconciled and healed through the merciful love of God. Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance) is a special healing sacrament in which God calls us to be reconciled, to be forgiven of our sins, to repair the bonds that are broken by our sins. It is a celebration of God’s amazing grace, welcoming us back home.

The Sacrament is basically our examining our conscience, confessing our sin, asking for forgiveness, being forgiven and then committing ourselves to changing our lives and helping others change theirs.

*“You are mine.  
You are precious in my eyes.  
You are honored and I love you.  
Do not be afraid. I am with you.”  
Isaiah 43: 1-4*

## Roman Catholic Church Diocese of Honolulu



To find a Catholic church near you to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, visit [www.catholicahawaii.org](http://www.catholicahawaii.org)

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. Priest gives a blessing or greeting.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross and say, “Bless me, father, for I have sinned. My last confession was [give weeks, months, or years].”
3. Confess all of your sins to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.)
4. Say, “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”
5. The priest assigns a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
6. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. (See sample inside this brochure.)  
The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.



DIOCESE OF HONOLULU  
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RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION  
IS THE STORY OF GOD'S LOVE THAT  
NEVER TURNS AWAY FROM US.

RECONCILIATION  
ONE 'OHANA

## Examination and Contrition

*“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.” Luke 15:18*

An **Examination of conscience** is a prayerful self-reflection on one’s sins. We look deeply into our lives and ask ourselves, “what is it that keeps me away from a deeper love of God and respect for other people? What is really burdening me; what is it that is keeping me from feeling at peace with myself, with God or others?”

Often when we reflect on our lives and we ask this question, we see there is a root sin or a major issue and that is really what needs to be expressed during the sacrament.

“**Sin**” literally means to miss the mark. Our goal is union with God, so anything that allows us to miss our target of union with God and others is considered sinful.

**Contrition** is feeling sorry for one’s sins. Sincere sorrow, genuine remorse, is necessary for the sacrament. Are you sorry for your sins?

If so, know that the love of God is able to find a space in your heart, especially through this sacrament!



*“You are with me always. And all I have is yours.”  
Luke 15:31*

## Confession and Absolution

This is a sacrament in which we have the grace and courage to bring our sins out into the light. It is called **Confession** – a formal admission of our sins. Confessing a particular sin is an extremely important step that we take in leaving that sin behind. It brings light to that sin and the sin kind of disintegrates with the light as it were.

In your confession, God is the ultimate hearer of your sins. The priest is the agent, the witness, who brings the healing power of the sacrament, the grace to renew you and release you from your sins.

The final part of the sacrament is the words of absolution, spoken by the priest. **Absolution** means the release and forgiveness of sins. God is always ready to forgive, even at the last moment.

*I will pour water on you  
and cleanse you  
of all your sins.  
Ezekiel 36:25*

### Act of Contrition

God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishment; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, do penance, and to amend my life.

Amen.

## Penance and Forgiveness

*“I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.” John 13:6*



The sacrament brings us all as sinners back to following the one great commandment that God gave us – to love God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Penance** is prayer or good works offered to repair the brokenness that happens when we sin. It is an opportunity to give back and to bring about the mending of that brokenness.

**Forgiveness** should be reflected in our relationships. We need to be forgiving, compassionate, understanding people. Forgiveness is a direction, not a destination.

We are called to forgive as we are forgiven, to go out and be forgiving, to be healers, to build community, to build ‘ohana, to be transformed and be transforming. Experiencing the sacrament of Reconciliation is a healing gift of the amazing grace of God’s unconditional love, God’s aloha.

*“Peace I leave with you: my peace I give to you...Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27*