**How to Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

1. Take sufficient time to reflect on your life before arriving. Reviewing an Examination of Conscience or watching the 33 minute video, which includes a homily & examination of conscience from Fr. Randy Phillips may be helpful to focus your thoughts.
2. Approach the Reconciliation Room (located to the south-west side of the Baptismal Font) and sit in the last pew nearby. As people arrive for the sacrament, the person closest to the end of the pew goes in first, then the next person and the next person in an orderly fashion. When you see the light outside the Reconciliation Room is turned “on”, you will know that a priest is ready inside. Enter only when the door is open. As you enter, close the door behind you.
3. After situating yourself (the Penitent,) in the Reconciliation Room…
	1. Immediately begin by making the “Sign of the Cross” aloud, praying….

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

* 1. Then ask for a blessing. Say…

**“Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first confession.”** or

**“Bless me Father for I have sinned, my last confession was\_\_\_\_\_.”**  (approximately how long ago)

* 1. **Now begin confessing your sins.** Speak honestly and clearly. Take your time. Think of having an honest conversation with Jesus.Remember, the priest is “standing in” for Jesus.
	2. *After listening to you, the priest will then talk to you awhile and then give you a penance.* What is a penance?

A penance is either a prayer or a kind act for you to do to show that you are sorry for your sins. By doing your penance, you are willing to live as Jesus’ disciple.

* + 1. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, exactly what is a penance? “Many sins wrong our neighbor. One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return stolen goods, restore the reputation of someone slandered, pay compensation for injuries). Simple justice requires as much. But sin also injures and weakens the sinner himself, as well as his relationships with God and neighbor. Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must “make satisfaction for” or “expiate” his sins. This satisfaction is also called “penance.” CCC 1469
	1. Pray aloud the “Act of Contrition.”As an adult, you may have learned a different version. Any version is fine to pray. A copy of this prayer is also on an end table in the Reconciliation Room if you do not have it memorized yet. This is the latest version of the prayer that our young people are taught:

**“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 things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.”** (Rite of Reconciliation 1975)

* 1. The priest then extends his hands over the penitent’s head and prays the 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 (at this time you should make the “Sign of the Cross”).*

* 1. You, the Penitent, answers: **“Amen.”**
	2. Priest then says, *“God bless you”* or “*Go in the peace of Christ,”* as you have now been reconciled to Christ and to the Church.
1. Get up and leave the Reconciliation Room leaving the **DOOR OPEN**, so the next person knows to enter.
2. Then take a few minutes for quiet prayer in church before leaving for home. Make sure you do your penance on a timely basis.