



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

17 February 2017

My friends in Christ,

I once again invite you to a day filled with God's grace during the season of Lent 2017. You will remember that an annual *Day of Confessions* was instituted across the Archdiocese of Edmonton as part of our celebrations for the Year of Faith in 2013. This year will mark the fifth time we have offered an entire day for the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation. We clergy, as instruments of Christ's mercy to you, continue to find ourselves graced through your response to this annual day of mercy.

Jesus renders the great mystery of the Trinitarian Love of God visible to each one of us. God's joy is forgiving. God delights in showering his mercy upon us. Therefore, I invite you to receive the gift of God's healing on the 2017 Day of Confessions: **Wednesday, March 8**. Priests will be available in all parishes throughout the day.

Please do not worry if you are not sure about what to say or do. The priest will be happy to guide you along. To assist you in your preparation we have included a short guide to the sacrament on our [Confession How-to](http://www.caedm.ca/confessions) page and other resources at the Day of Confessions website at www.caedm.ca/confessions.

We look forward to celebrating God's love and mercy with you on March 8.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ *Richard W. Smith*

Archbishop of Edmonton





Wednesday, March 8

All Day. All Priests. All Parishes.
DAY OF CONFESSIONS

FIRST, take a deep breath...it's easier than you think.

STEP 1

Look at your life. Examine your conscience. See where you've made some mistakes. Ask, "How have I hurt God, others, myself?"

STEP 2

- Have a firm intention to change your life. Find a Catholic priest who will hear your confession.
- The priest will welcome and greet you. Make the Sign of the Cross.
- The priest invites you to have trust in God using one of the formulas in the ritual or similar words.
- It is helpful for you to indicate your state in life (married, single, or clergy), how long since your last confession, and anything else that may help the confessor in exercising his ministry.
- Confess your sins. Start with the most serious ones, and how often you do them. Then tell your less serious sins.

STEP 3

Listen for and accept the prayers and deeds that the priest proposes as a penance (a penance is an outward act to show your repentance for the wrongdoings).

- The priest asks you to pray a formal prayer (an Act of Contrition, by saying or reading it), or to declare in your own words your sorrow for your sins, your plea for forgiveness, and your promise to do penance and be a better person.
- The priest then prays the Prayer of Absolution (blessing by which your sins are forgiven by God) to which you respond "Amen."

STEP 4

Carry out your penance and start to live a new life. Enjoy the peace that comes with God's forgiveness.

Q. What if I'm nervous because I don't know what to do in Confession?

No problem. Feel free to ask the priest to guide you through the sacrament. He's there to serve you.

Q. I've done some really bad stuff. Won't I shock the priest?

Priests have heard thousands of confessions over the years, and they also go to confession themselves. Really there are no new sins. Besides, priests find it a great privilege to hear confessions and be instruments to God's people of the Father's mercy.

Q. Can a priest later repeat something he heard in Confession?

Under no circumstances! The Church considers the honouring and protection of the penitent's privacy a sacred duty of the priest. Indeed, were a priest to violate "the seal of confession," he would be automatically excommunicated from the Church.

Q. I'm divorced and remarried outside the Church. Can I still go to Confession?

Every one of us in the Church is a sinner, and everyone is welcome regardless of our past or present situation. The confessional is a safe place to identify your concerns to a priest and receive non-judgmental advice about possible next steps.