

## Order for Public Confession

### Preparatory to the Holy Communion

*The Order for Public Confession is a Vesper Service, and should be appointed for the afternoon or evening of the Friday or Saturday preceding the Holy Communion, when all who purpose to commune should be present.*

*When the Confessional service immediately precedes The Service, the Order shall begin with the words:*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

**℟ Amen.**

*Then shall follow: The Exhortation, the Confession, the Absolution, and the New Testament Benediction. The Service shall begin with the Introit for the Day.*

*A Hymn of Invocation of the Holy Ghost, or another suitable Hymn may be sung.*

*The Versicles with the Gloria Patri shall be sung or said, the congregation standing until the end of the Psalm.*

Make haste O God, to deliver me.

**℟ Make haste to help me, O God.**

℣ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

**℟ A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.**

℣ Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost:

**℟ as it was in the beginning, is now, and every shall be, world without end. Amen.**

*Then shall be sung or said this Psalm:*

#### The Psalm [Psalm 51]

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness:

according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity:

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions:

and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight:

that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity:

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts:

and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Make me to hear joy and gladness:  
that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.  
Hide Thy face from my sins:  
and blot out all mine iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God:  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Thy presence:  
and take not Thy holy spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation:  
and uphold me with Thy free spirit.  
Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways:  
and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.  
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation:  
and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.  
O Lord, open Thou my lips:  
and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*Then shall one or more of the following Lessons of Holy Scripture be read.*

#### **The Lesson**

Exodus 20:1-17	Matthew 11:25-30
Daniel 9:4-9, 17-19	Mark 12:28-31
Isaiah 1:11-18	Luke 13:1-9
1 John 1:5-9	Luke 15:1-2, 11-31
1 Corinthians 11:23-29	John 13:1-17
Matthew 5:21-29	John 20:19-23

*Then may follow an Address or Sermon, after which shall be sung a Hymn.*

#### **The Hymn**

*Then shall the Congregation stand, and the Minister shall say the following Exhortation:*

#### **The Exhortation**

Dearly Beloved! Forasmuch as we purpose to come to the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, it becometh us diligently to examine ourselves, as St. Paul exhorteth us. For this Holy Sacrament hath been instituted for the special comfort and strengthening of those who humbly confess their sins, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

But if we thus examine ourselves, we shall find nothing in us but only sin and death, from which we can in no wise set ourselves free. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ hath had mercy upon us, and hath taken upon Himself our nature, that so He might fulfil for us the whole will and law of God, and for us and for our deliverance suffer death and all that we by our sins have deserved. And to the end that we should the more confidently believe this, and be strengthened by our faith in a cheerful obedience to His holy will, He hath instituted the Holy Sacrament of His supper, in which He feedeth us with His Body, and giveth us to drink of His Blood.

Therefore whoso eateth of this bread, and drinketh of this cup, firmly believing the words of Christ, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him, and hath eternal life.

We should also do this in remembrance of Him, showing His death, that He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, and rendering unto Him most hearty thanks for the same, take up our cross and follow Him, and, according to His commandment, love one another even as He hath loved us. For we are all one bread and one body, even as we are all partakers of this one bread, and drink of this one cup.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

*Then shall the Minister begin the Confession as here follows:*

### **The Confession**

I now ask you in the presence of Almighty God, Who searcheth the heart:

Do you truly acknowledge, confess, and lament that you are by nature sinful, and that by omitting to do good and by doing evil you have in thought, word, and deed, grieved and offended your God and Saviour, and thereby justly deserved His condemnation?

If this be the sincere confession of your hearts, declare it by saying: Yes.

*Answer: Yes.*

Do you truly believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that all who believe on His Name receive the forgiveness of sins? Do you, therefore, earnestly desire to be delivered from all your sins, and are you confident that it is the gracious will of your Heavenly Father, for Christ's Sake, to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness?

If so, confess it by saying: Yes.

*Answer: Yes.*

Is it your earnest purpose, henceforth, to be obedient to the Holy Spirit, so as to hate and forsake all manner of sin, to live as in God's presence, and to strive daily after holiness of heart and life?

If so, answer: Yes.

*Answer: Yes.*

Let us humbly kneel, and make confession unto God, imploring His forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Then shall all kneel, and say:*

**O God, our Heavenly Father, I confess unto Thee that I have grievously sinned against Thee in many ways; not only by outward transgression, but also by secret thoughts and desires, which I cannot fully understand, but which are all known unto Thee. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my offences, and I beseech Thee of Thy great goodness to have mercy upon me, and for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to forgive my sins, and graciously to help my infirmities. Amen.**

*Then shall the Minister rise and say the Absolution. The Congregation shall remain kneeling until after the Benediction.*

#### **The Absolution**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us, and for the sake of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, forgiveth us all our sins. As a Minister of the Church of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore declare unto you who do truly repent and believe in Him, the entire forgiveness of all your sins: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

[On the other hand, by the same authority, I declare unto the impenitent and unbelieving, that so long as they continue in their impenitence, God hath not forgiven their sins, and will assuredly visit their iniquities upon them, if they turn not from their evil ways, and come to true repentance and faith in Christ, ere the day of grace be ended.]<sup>1</sup>

*Then shall the Minister kneel, and all shall say the Lord's Prayer.*

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, Who art in heaven: Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; hut deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

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<sup>1</sup> Some feel that "On the other hand, by the same authority, I declare unto the impenitent..." makes the absolution unclear and second guesses the penitent in their confession.

*Then Shall the Minister say the Collect for the Day, except when The Service immediately follows this order.*

*(After the Collects.)*

**℟ Amen.**

*Then may other suitable Collects be said, and after them the Collect for Peace.*

℣ The Lord will give strength unto His people.

**℟ The Lord will bless His people with peace.**

### The Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed, give unto Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments, and also that by Thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost ever one God, world without end.

**℟ Amen**

*The Minister shall rise and say the Benediction:*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

**℟ Amen.**