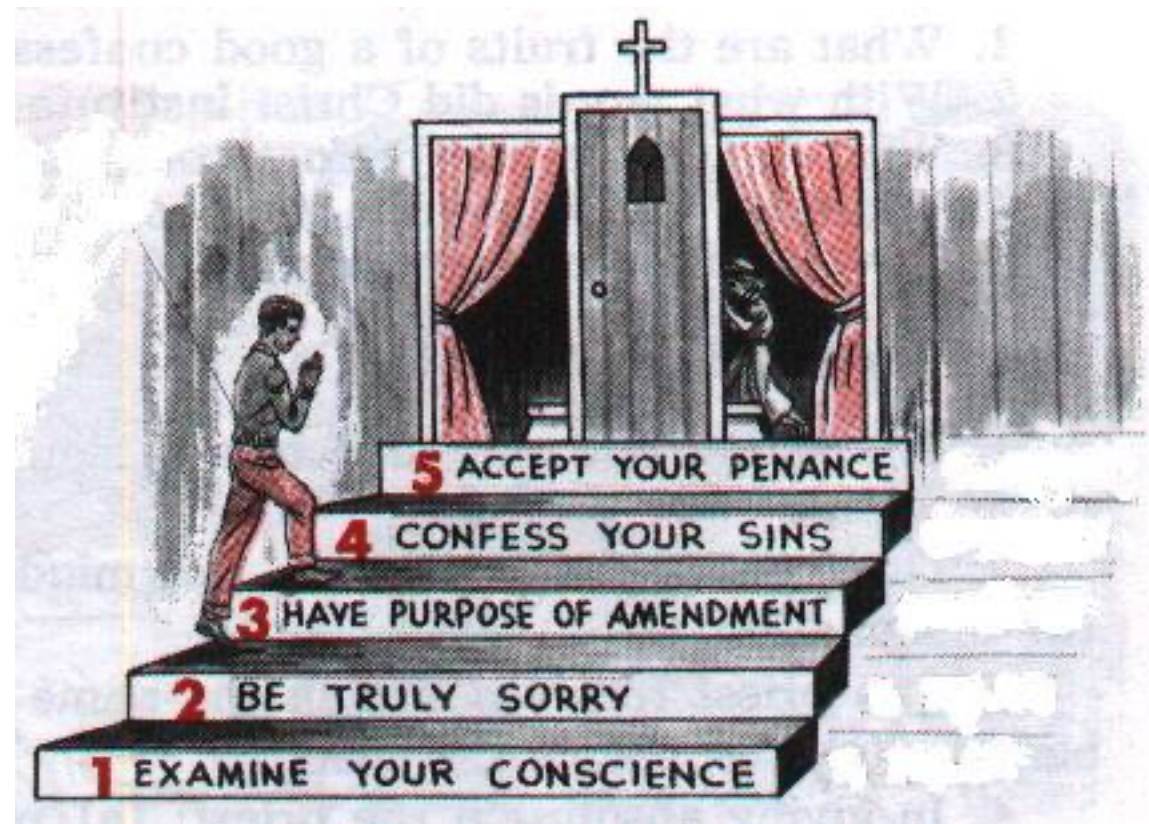


Communal Penance



The Three Rites of Reconciliation

- First Rite - for the Reconciliation of Individual Penitents.
- **Second Rite** - for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.
- Third Rite - for Reconciliation with General Confession and Absolution. This Rite is used only in extreme cases of emergency.

What is Communal Penance?

- Communal Penance Services or Reconciliation Services are a form of sacramental confession.
It mixes public prayer and individual confession to a priest, followed by absolution.
- Only in extreme cases of emergency, such as on a battlefield, may a priest give "general absolution" to all at the same time; and that with the stipulation that the individual penitents go to confession individually as soon as possible.
- This special service provides a time where it is easier to go to confession, as there are multiple priests and the lines are much shorter than normal.
- Lent and Advent are perfect times for these services, as they prepare our souls for the coming feast of Easter or Christmas.

Communal Penance - Structure of the Service

- Public Prayer
 - ▶ Usually, a communal penance service includes a Scripture reading and a brief exhortation by the priest.
 - ▶ An examination of conscience follows this, and the community prays the Act of Contrition together.
 - ▶ Sometimes, a single, general penance is assigned to everyone participating; at other times, a penance is given during the individual confession.
- Individual Confession and Reconciliation
 - ▶ After the communal part of the ceremony, those present will individually confess their sins to the priest and receive absolution and penance if it has not been assigned in the communal setting.
 - ▶ The Act of Contrition is not repeated privately because it has been part of the communal service.
 - ▶ The priest prays the words of absolution individually over the penitent, or a collective penance is given.

Why was Communal Service Introduced?

The reason for Communal Penance Service is to facilitate SEVERAL Confessors for a large group of penitents to hear individual confessions.

As a parish priest, I try to encourage my people to avail themselves of the Penance Service because we often have TEN priests coming to help hear individual confessions. Rather than waiting until the last minute and waiting in line for awhile for ONE or TWO of the parish priests to hear many confessions, the Church in her wisdom, developed this Communal Penance Service.

Now, a 100 or more people can go to confession with TEN priests hearing ten confessions a piece within an hour. Alone, it would take the pastor much more time to hear all of those confessions.

FATHER TRIGILIO RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICES - EWTN

Number of those going to confession has declined

Four-in-Ten Catholics Say They Go to Confession at Least Once a Year

	Catholics	Cultural Catholics	Ex-Catholics
	%	%	%
NET Once a year or more	43	6	2
At least once a month	7	1	0
Several times a year	14	1	1
Once a year	21	4	1
Less than once a year	23	9	1
NET Never/not asked	33	86	97
Never	28	33	14
Not asked*	5	53	83
Don't know/refused	2	0	1
	100	100	100

Source: Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Catholics and Family Life, May 5–June 7, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

*Respondents who said that they never attend Mass were not asked whether they go to confession.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Data from Pew Research 2015

In the 1950s and 1960s, about 80 percent of America's Catholics went to confession at least once a year.

A study in the early 1960s found that 70 percent had been to confession in the previous month.

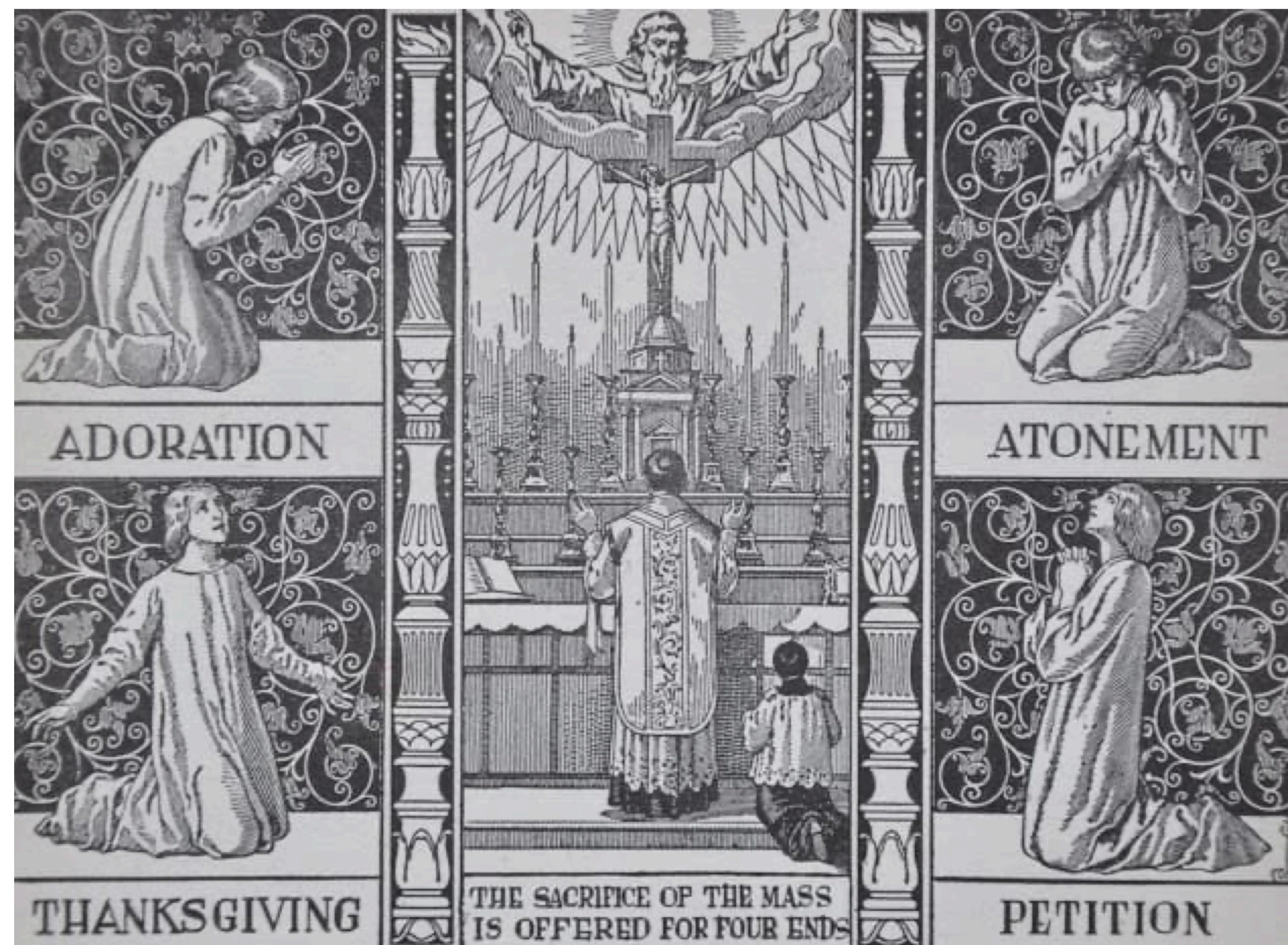
But by 1986, confession in the previous month had fallen to 23 percent.

Among Catholics aged 18-30, it was 14 percent.

RITE OF PENANCE

- A. Number of those going to confession has declined - why, how can it be reversed?
 - a. Figures like those in previous slide did gain the attention of the Vatican.
In 2012, president of the USCCB, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, warned his fellow bishops that the sacrament was in peril. He suggested bishops consider “re-embracing Friday as a particular day of penance, including the possible reinstatement of abstinence on all Fridays of the year, not just during Lent.”
 - b. Other suggestions were brought forward, one of them was Communal Penance.
 - c. Man died after car crash. Here’s what he saw -> “a shocking glimpse of an afterlife without God”; how it changed him
- B. REDISCOVERING THE RITE OF PENANCE 2015 Vatican document REDISCOVERING THE RITE OF PENANCE
- C. RITE OF PENANCE INTRODUCTION (introduction/summary from various Vatican & liturgical documents)
- D. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (St. John Henry Newman)
- E. Example of a Communal Service (Chicago archdiocese)
- F. 3 articles written about decline in going to confession - different reasons and suggestions
 - a. Why have Catholics stopped lining up at the confessional? (America Jesuit Review)
 - b. Church scrambles to save ‘endangered sacrament’ of confession (CRUX Catholic Pulse)
 - c. Why have Catholics stopped lining up at the confessional? (Slate - daily web magazine)

Another “Communal” Way to Gain Forgiveness of venial sins The Mass & Eucharist



Four Ends of the Mass

Things That Remit Venial Sins — The Traditional Liturgy Is Full of Them

There are many remedies against venial sins; for example, beating of the breast, sprinkling with holy water, extreme unction, and every sacramental anointing; a bishop's blessing, blessed bread, general confession, compassion, the forgiveness of another's faults, the Eucharist, the Lord's Prayer, and other sorts of light penance. [St. Thomas Aquinas, Angelic Doctor of Church]

Four Ends of the Mass (also for other Prayers)

1. **Adoration** - The Holy Mass is first and foremost an act of loving adoration. It is worship of God our Father. Why? Because he deserves it.
2. **Thanksgiving** - All that we are and have comes from God's generous hand. Every good, every blessing finds its source in God alone, and our very existence is dependent on his will.
3. **Atonement** - We are all sinners, and while we do our best to rationalize and minimize it, all sin is a grave offense against God, incurring his just wrath. Jesus Christ atoned for our sins totally and completely, and we have the assurance that if we turn to him in repentance and faith, we can find forgiveness and healing.
4. **Petition** - The mass is a powerful form of prayer. In fact, it is the most powerful prayer the Church possesses.

St. Jerome once said, "Without doubt, the Lord grants all favors which are asked of Him in Mass, provided they be fitting for us." Many of the saints tell us that bringing our requests before Our Lord after the consecration is one of the most effective ways to obtain all that we need spiritually and physically.

What is the mass?

1. Let's begin with what the mass is not. The mass is not a community meal designed to strengthen our unity and "gather us in."
2. The mass is not about you. It is not about having a wonderful "weekend experience," as one new parish based program claims. Nor is its purpose to make you feel good about yourself, to encourage you, to inspire you, or to make you feel included and welcomed. You simply aren't the audience—God is, and the mass is all about him.
3. It is first and foremost a sacrifice. In fact, it is the once for all sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, that transcends time and space, made present for us again in an unbloody manner. It is the perfect sacrifice that all the Old Testament sacrifices prefigured (See Malachi 1:11).
4. In it, Jesus Christ lovingly offers himself in an act of oblation to God the Father on our behalf. He adores God the Father, he atones for our sins, he offers thanks and praise, and he intercedes for our needs.
5. As Catholics, we have the privilege of attending this sacrifice, and uniting ourselves to Christ's self offering. Put another way, we can imitate Christ by offering ourselves, souls and bodies, to God the Father as "living sacrifices," as St. Paul says. This is what participation in the mass really means.
6. In the prayer *Orate Frates*, the priest acknowledges this participation of the faithful when he prays, "Pray brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father."

What Must we do to have our Venial Sins Forgiven?

1. Before Mass prepare properly for Mass
 - ☐ No mortal sins
 - ☐ Proper mindset - focus on Jesus
 - ☐ Spend time before mass, get to church early; talk and pray to Jesus.
See document of a set of some example prayers. Especially pray Act of Contrition prayer.
 - ☐ Preparing for Mass According to the Four Ends of Prayer
2. Focus during mass especially during the consecration (be sure to say “My Lord and my God” at the bells when the priest raises the chalice and host) and canon of the mass.
3. Receive the Body of Christ REVERENTLY with Sorrow for your Sins - you are asking Jesus to forgive your sins; remember God knows all.
4. When are back in the pew spend time talking and saying post communion prayers. See document of a set of some example prayers. Remember Jesus is totally with you for about 15 minutes; take advantage of His time with you.