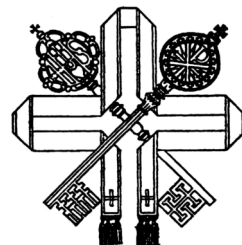


Q & A on the Revisions in the Order of Penance

Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023, penitents in the Sacrament of Confession may notice some different words being used by the priest. In the same way that the translation of the *Roman Missal* was updated over a decade ago, the English translation of the *Order of Penance* has been updated as well according to the most recent instruction on the use of the vernacular in the liturgy: the instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* of 2001.



Q.—What has changed in the Order of Penance for the penitent?

A.—Very little has changed for the penitent. You'll still go to the confession in the same way as you've always gone to confession. You might notice that some of the invitations and texts of the priest have changed slightly. There might be a new card or sheet in the confessional to help you with the new texts.

Q.—What has changed in the Order of Penance for the priest/confessor?

A.—As with the other revised rituals, the texts have been updated in accordance with *Liturgiam authenticam*. The most significant change is that the formula of absolution has been changed to be closer to the Latin text. It is also hoped that the publication of a new translation might become an occasion by priests for a renewed study of the introduction (*prænotanda*) and for an increased use of the rich options available in the text for the celebration of the sacrament.

Q.—What has changed in the formula of absolution?

A.—The former version said “sent the Holy Spirit among us” whereas the new version says “poured out the Holy Spirit.” In addition, the former version said “may God give you pardon and peace” whereas the new version says “may God grant you pardon and peace.”

Q.—Aren't these changes useless? Why make such miniscule changes?

A.—Indeed, the bishops had debated whether the minor changes were worth undertaking. However, the consensus favored striving for a more accurate translation from the Latin. *Liturgiam authenticam* requires that the original Latin text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner into the vernacular. “Poured out” is a better English translation of the Latin *effudit*; “Grant” is a better English translation of the Latin *tribuat*. Furthermore, by making such changes, it is an opportunity to make sure priests know and always use and memorize the correct formula of absolution.

Q.—When do these changes take effect? What if my priest uses the former version?

A.—The new formula of absolution may be used beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023. It must be used after Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16, 2023. Therefore, between February 22 and April 16, penitents may hear both versions in the confessional. The essential formula of absolution (“I absolve you...”) has not changed. While a priest should always use the revised formula after April 16, if through habit or forgetfulness, he uses the former version, it is valid.

Q.—Has the Act of the Contrition changed?

A.—The Acts of Contrition printed in the *Order of Penance* have been revised. However, a penitent is free to express his or her contrition in similar words and may use any Act of Contrition he or she has memorized or that is printed in the confessional or on a card or pamphlet.