

CATECHESIS: THE HOLY MYSTERY OF REPENTANCE

"Repentance means renewal of our baptism. Repentance means agreement with God for a new life." St John of the Ladder, *Step Five*

"you do not despise the sinner, but have set repentance as the way of salvation."
Divine Liturgy, *prayer of the thrice-holy hymn, p. 143*

"Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, God's visitation the forgiveness of sins for the servants of God..." *Liturgy, Prayer of fervent supplication, p. 149*

"So that, to those who partake of them, they may bring vigilance of soul, forgiveness of sins, the communion of your Holy spirit, the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven and boldness before you, but not judgment nor condemnation." *Liturgy, Anaphora, p. 170*

Prayer before Holy Communion, Liturgy, p. 181

PRELIMINARY NOTES

1. A little history
2. The range of practices is very broad in Orthodoxy
3. The form of the ritual varies from Jurisdiction to Jurisdiction, priest to priest
4. The frequency of confession varies across jurisdictions (Prayer book p. 426)

REASONS (EXCUSES) WE GIVE OURSELVES NOT TO CONFESS

1. Procrastination
2. Sense of shame
3. Minimization of offenses
4. Repetition: how many times do I have to confess the same sin?
5. Distrust of the priest's authorization
6. Failure to recognize the gift and its power in your life

PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL NOTES ABOUT CONFESSION

1. Central to our understanding is the parable of the prodigal (Luke 15:11-32)
2. Confession is not obligatory before receiving Holy Communion
3. Confession is not perfunctory, i.e., a mere ritual in the rota of the church
4. Confession is not grounded on guilt - the term is NOT in the New Testament 5. Confession is not juridical - the aim is not judgment but healing
5. Confession may occasionally imply confrontation and penance
6. Confession always implies the restoration of a relationship with God and with your brothers and sisters in the faith, hence it is never an isolated, individual act, but it is communal (hence our practice)

BASIC TERMS FROM SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

hamartia (ἁμαρτία)	sin, really "missing the mark"
homologesis (ὁμολογοῖν)	<i>confession</i> , profession of faith
koinonia (κοινωνία)	<i>fellowship or community</i>
metanoia (μετανοία)	<i>repentance</i> , "changing the mind/orientation"
nepsis (νήψις)	<i>vigilance</i> , keeping watch over heart and mind
penthos (πέντηος)	<i>compunction</i> , literally, "pricking" to tears
parresia (παρρησία)	<i>boldness</i> , "the right to speak publicly/openly"

UOC PRAYER BOOK REFERENCES:

The Holy Mystery of Repentance (Confession)	p. 32
Prayers and Instructions regarding Confession	p. 42

BIBLICAL REFERENCES:

Psalm 19, 25, 79, 103 and others
Matthew 5:23
Matthew 6:12-15
Matthew 18:15-19
John 20: 19-23 James 5:16