After Jesus declared that Peter would be the rock upon which he would build his Church, he said to Peter, “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt 16:13-20)

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, extended his peace, breathed the holy Spirit on them, and sent them out saying, “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (Jn 20:19-23)

W HAT?

The way we embrace Christ’s call to conversion.
The step we take to express true repentance for our offenses.
The confession of our sins.
The reception of God’s pardon and peace.
The restoration of our relationship with God and with the Church.

WHY?

We were born with the effects of original sin: disobedience toward God and a lack of trust in his goodness (Gen 3:1-11).

God the Father sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins (Jn 3:16).

Jesus accomplished his saving mission by establishing the Kingdom of God and by suffering, dying on the cross, rising from the dead, and ascending into heaven (Mt 5:17).

Jesus established the Church to continue his saving mission by the power of the Holy Spirit through the celebration of the sacraments (Mk 1:15, Jn 19:34, Acts 2:1-4, 2 Cor 5:18).

Through faith in the Gospel and Baptism, we are first washed clean of all sin (Acts 2:38).

Through the Sacrament of Penance, we continue to experience the forgiveness of our sins (Mt 16:13-20, Jn 20:19-23).
Going to Confession in Twelve Easy Steps

1. Examine your conscience, call to mind your sins, and then enter the confessional.
2. The priest will welcome and receive you.
3. Make the sign of the cross and say: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”
4. The priest will invite you to trust in God. He may also read a text of Sacred Scripture.
5. Say these or similar words:
   “Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been _____long since my last confession. These are my sins…”
6. Tell the priest your sins. Then say these or similar words: “For these and all of my sins, I am sorry.”
7. Accept your work of penance (prayers, act of kindness, etc.) to help make satisfaction and amend your life.
8. Express your sorrow for your sins (Act of Contrition) in these or similar words:
   “O my God, I am sorry and repent with all my heart for all the wrong I have done
   and for the good I have failed to do,
   because by sinning I have offended you,
   who are all good and worthy to be loved above all things.
   I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to do penance, to sin no more,
   and to avoid the occasions of sin.
   Through the merits of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ, Lord, have mercy.”
9. Receive God’s forgiveness as the priest prays the Prayer of Absolution.
10. At the end of the Prayer of Absolution, reply: “Amen.”
11. Give praise to God. When the priest says: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,”
   conclude: “For his mercy endures forever.”
12. Go in peace and remember to say or do your penance.