

SECTION 9: PENANCE

The following policies shall be followed in regard to the Sacrament of Penance.

9.1 MINISTER OF PENANCE

- Only a validly ordained priest may celebrate the sacrament of penance.
- The sacramental seal is inviolable. It is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner for any reason.
- All confessors are bound to the sacramental seal. Also bound by this same seal are all those to whom knowledge of sins from confession shall come in any way.
- Absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the sixth commandment is invalid, except in danger of death.

9.2 GENERAL ABSOLUTION

- General absolution is only allowed when the *danger of death* is imminent and there is not time for the priest or priests to hear the confessions of the individual penitents.
- *In all other cases*, the prior permission of the Archbishop must be obtained before general absolution may be given.

9.3 CONFESSION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

Priests may celebrate the sacrament of penance for Orthodox Christians if:

1. they freely ask for it;
2. and they are properly disposed. (*c.f.*, *Canon 844.3*)

9.4 CONFESSIONS OF EPISCOPALIANS AND PROTESTANTS

A priest may celebrate the sacrament of penance for Episcopalians and Protestants who are in danger of death if:

- they cannot approach their own minister;
- they freely ask for the sacrament;
- they manifest Catholic faith in regard to the sacrament;

- and they are properly disposed. (*c.f.*, *Canon 844.4*)

In all other cases, the prior permission of the Archbishop is to be obtained before a priest celebrates this sacrament for Episcopalians or Protestants.

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