

How can I come back to Church?

For some of us it only takes a good Sacramental Confession. For others it may be a longer journey back involving friendship, prayer, changes in lifestyle, and adult level instruction. What about those like me? How can we come back?

1. It helps to understand why and how we left in the first place. How happily involved were we before we drifted away? How faithful were we to the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Was wrongdoing the cause of our leaving?
2. How close or far away are we now? Do we still pray? Are we sorry? Do we want to come home to Church? Are there obstacles to coming back? Do we still carry unforgiveness for a priest or parishioners?
3. What will help us on our journey back to Jesus alive as Church?
 - Prayers of others, family and my own. Be open to God's help.
 - A happy example of a Catholic friend or someone who already made the journey back. The continued faithfulness of our parents and family.
 - We may need a little review on how to go to confession again.
 - One of the best good starts might be attendance at a parish retreat, a Catholic Inquiry session, or a Catholics Returning Home program.
 - Talk with a priest. Know he has special gifts of the Holy Spirit to help.
 - Some of us won't move until God sends a gift of trial and trauma to scare the h-e-double toothpicks out of us.
 - Learn not to be defensive when others try to give spiritual advice.
 - Some of us may need counseling and prayer to rid our hearts of bitterness and unforgiveness.
 - Admit to any wrongdoing that keeps us away.
 - Note that just trying to get back to Sunday Mass may be a good start but without getting freedom from mortal sin we haven't accomplished much.
 - If in an unsanctioned marriage, find someone in the Church who knows such things. Often there are more options than we may think.
 - Decide to come back all the way. "Pick and Choose Christianity," simply does not work. That's likely what led many of us away in the first place.
 - Come back. We love you. We all need one another to be Jesus to the world.