

## Signs and Symbols of Reconciliation

**Keys** are the most reoccurring symbol when completing the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The keys are made up of a single or pair of keys that are usually crisscrossed in the shape of an X.



The symbol came from the words spoken by Jesus to Peter, which was, “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 16:19), by speaking these words He established the Sacrament of Reconciliation and gave the Catholic Church the right to forgive people’s sins.



**A Stole** is the key symbol of the ordained priesthood. A stole is a narrow, long strip of cloth that is placed over the shoulders and hangs in front of the body. A stole shows the priest’s right to have control over the sacraments and to forgive sins. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest will wear a purple stole as it symbolizes sorrow and penance.



**A Raised Hand** is another symbol of Reconciliation. The priest will extend his right hands and place it over the penitent’s head as it acts as a blessing that will remove the person’s wrongful acts. He will do this during the Rite of Reconciliation.



**The Cross** is used when the priest makes a Sign of the Cross over the penitent whilst simultaneously reciting the final words of the Prayer of Absolution, “And I absolve you from you sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”



**The Scourging Whip** is an important symbol in the Reconciliation process. The scourging whip was used on Jesus Christ at the column post before he was died on the cross. *“He was crushed for our sins, by his stripes we were healed; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear; he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses” (Is 53:5, 11, 12).*

Images from <https://thesacramentofreconciliationced.weebly.com/symbols.html> and <http://lillian-marie.blogspot.com/2008/10/symbols-of-sacrament-of-penance.html>