

# THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The sacrament of Reconciliation is a special encounter with Jesus Christ, it is a fruitful source of grace. The *Catechism* tells us: “The sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true “spiritual resurrection,” restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God” (1468). Indeed, the sacrament of Reconciliation is a time for love, mercy and healing. Regrettably, some see this sacrament of forgiveness and healing as a cause for anxiety and fear. Jesus intended it to be a time of compassion and mercy and every priest in confession is conscious of being a minister of understanding and forgiveness. When Jesus gave us this sacrament He knew well our human nature and knew the need we have to hear the freeing words: “I absolve you of your sins. . . .” The Church recommends monthly confession as a spiritual discipline. At a minimum, Catholics must make a confession of sins when they are conscious of mortal sin before the reception of holy Communion. The precept of the Church says that Catholics ought to confess their sins in the sacrament of Confession at least once a year during the Easter Season

There are many blessings in frequent confession (cf. CCC 1425-1498). Among such blessings are the following:

1. It restores divine life to those who have lost it through mortal sin.
2. It increases grace and one’s capacity for grace and helps one to grow in Christian maturity.
3. It brings order and peace into one’s life by causing one to pause at regular intervals and ask oneself the all important question: Where am I in my relationship with God?
4. It improves personal relations with others by making one aware of attitudes and actions that cause pain to others.
5. It motivates one to practice the basic Christian virtues: faith, hope, charity, humility, self denial, repentance, detachment from the pagan ways of modern life.

*Making a good confession* entails contrition (sincere sorrow for offending God), confession of sin (confronting our sinfulness in an honest manner) and satisfaction (making amends by following the priest’s advice and doing the penance he imposes). A good confession requires preparation by prayer, examining the conscience and the making the resolve not to sin again.

*At the sacrament*

*Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (estimate time since last confession) since my last confession.*

The Act of Contrition

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.*