

# **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

# The Sacrament of Reconciliation

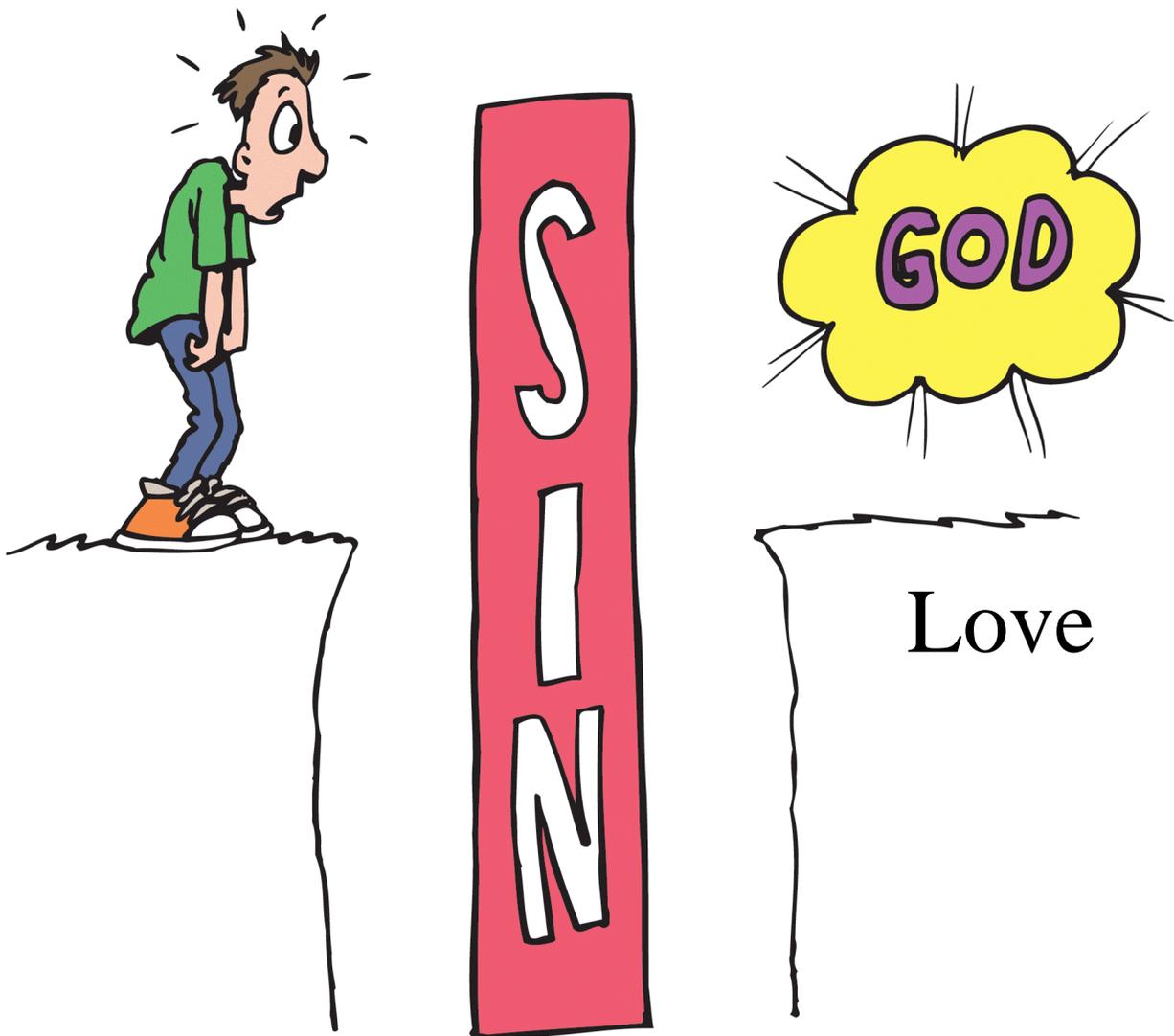
## A. What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation (or Confession)?

- # The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament which provides spiritual healing for souls wounded by sin.
- # When our body gets sick because of some virus, we go to a doctor for our body to get well.
- # When our soul gets sick because of sin, we go to the priest (who represents Christ) for our soul to get well.
- # Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
  - ❖ Sinners are forgiven.
  - ❖ Grace & strength are given to help avoid sin in the future.
- # The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a chance for us to say to Jesus that we are sorry and to ask for forgiveness.
- # It is also a chance to ask for advice and guidance from the priest.
- # If approached with a sorrowful heart, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is often followed by a certain feeling of peace and calmness.



## B. Let us Talk About Sin

- ✚ Sin is something we say, do, or desire that goes against God's law of love.
- ✚ It is a failure to love God or our neighbor rightly.
- ✚ There two kinds of sins we can commit: venial and mortal.



## 1. Venial Sin



- ✚ A venial sin is a small sin, a less serious sin.
- ✚ Venial sin weakens our love for God, but sanctifying grace remains.
- ✚ Sins that children commit are usually venial sins.
- ✚ Examples of venial sins:
  - ❖ Not respecting (or obeying) a parent or teacher or someone in authority.
  - ❖ Pouting
  - ❖ Being unkind to others in words or actions.
  - ❖ Saying bad words.
  - ❖ Not sharing with others.
  - ❖ Getting mad and hitting a brother or sister
  - ❖ Being a bully at school.
  - ❖ Not letting a classmate play with you.
  - ❖ Being bossy.
  - ❖ Taking something that doesn't belong to you (stealing).

## 2. Mortal Sin



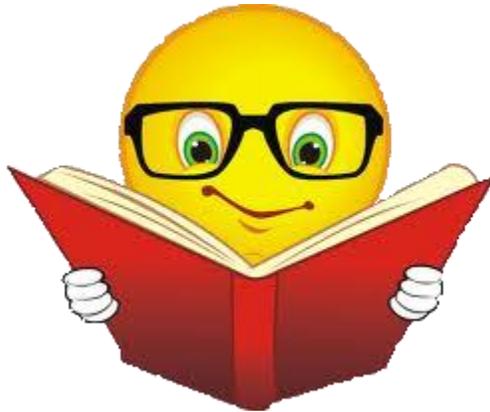
- ✚ A mortal sin is a big sin, a serious sin.
- ✚ I person who commits a mortal sin loses all the sanctifying grace in their soul.
- ✚ Losing sanctifying grace is a bad thing, because we can't be united with God in heaven without it.
- ✚ Examples of mortal sins:
  - ❖ Killing or hurting someone really bad.
  - ❖ Stealing a lot of money or something that costs of lot of money.
  - ❖ Telling a big lie that really hurts someone.
  - ❖ Drinking a lot of alcohol or taking illegal drugs.
  - ❖ Kidnapping someone.
  - ❖ An adult abusing (or seriously hurting) a child in some way.
  - ❖ A man and woman living together without being married.
  - ❖ For Catholics intentionally missing Mass on Sunday (or Saturday night), without good reason is considered a serious sin.

**For a sin to be mortal three conditions have to be met:**

- 1. It is something considered to be serious matter (very bad).**
- 2. Full knowledge that it is a serious matter.**
- 3. Full consent in doing it.**



**Serious Matter**



**Full Knowledge**



**Full Consent**

- ✚ Sometimes a person may not know it is a serious sin.**
- ✚ Sometimes a person may be pressured into doing something they did not really want to do, so they don't give their full consent.**
- ✚ For example, many Catholics may not know (or understand) that missing Mass on Sunday (or Saturday night) is a serious sin. They would not be guilty of a mortal sin because of their ignorance.**
- ✚ In some places of the world a Mass is not offered every week or the church is too far away to get to easily. They would not be guilty of a mortal sin because of the situation.**
- ✚ If you are not sure, ask the priest in confession about whether a sin is a mortal sin or not.**

## **C. Why Confess Our Sins to a priest?**

**Why can't I just tell God I am sorry?**

- + Yes, we can and should tell God that we am sorry.**
- + But how can (or do) we do that?**
- + We can say I am sorry in our mind. But, we often still feel sad inside.**
- + We may not be sure God forgave us.**
- + We feel better if we can talk to someone we can trust about things that make us sad, things we are sorry for.**
- + We feel better if we actually hear the words "You are forgiven."**
- + We experience those things when we go to Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).**
- + We experience the love and mercy of Jesus through the priest.**
- + We receive extra graces to help us avoid sin in the future.**



## **D. What Sins Must I Confess?**

- + Venial sins may be confessed, especially ones I struggle with.**
- + For example, if I struggle being patient, I may talk to the priest about that.**
- + That struggle with patience may lead to other sins, like being unkind and saying bad words.**
- + The question is why am I impatient and what can I do to be better.**
  
- + All mortal sins that I know I committed must be confessed and how many times I committed the sins.**
  
- + Now, children usually don't commit mortal sins**
  
- + *What happens if I forget to tell a sin?***
- + If it is a venial sin and you were sorry, then that sin was forgiven in Confession.**
- + If it is a mortal sin that you forgot and were sorry, then that sin is forgiven, but you would need to confess it the next time you go to confession.**

### ***E. Are my sins always forgiven?***

-  For sins to be forgiven you must be:
  - ❖ truly sorry from them
  - ❖ try not to commit those sins again
  - ❖ receive absolution from the priest.

### ***F. What does being sorry for my sins mean?***

-  It means that you sincerely:
  - ❖ Feel sad for committing the sins and you hate those sins.
  - ❖ Intend not to commit those sins in the future.
  - ❖ Resolve to stay away from any person, place or thing that can easily lead you into sin.

### ***G. How often must I go to confession?***

-  Serious / mortal sins must be confessed at least once a year.
-  Anyone aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion without first going to confession.
-  It is good to go frequently (e.g., once a month), even if there are no mortal sins to confess. Receiving the Sacrament frequently, will help keep you on the right track, if you begin to stray from God.

### ***H. What is the seal of confession?***

-  The priest is never allowed to tell what he has heard in confession.
-  He must be willing to die rather than break that secret.

## ***How to go to Confession***

### ***A. Preparing for Confession***

1. Examination of Conscience
2. Contrition for Sins
  - a. Sorrow for sins committed
  - b. Detestation {hatred} for sins committed
  - c. Resolution not to sin again.

### ***B. Going to Confession***

#### **RECEPTION OF THE PENITENT**

The priest welcomes the penitent and greets him with kindness. The penitent along with the priest makes the sign of the cross:

**Priest:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Penitent:** Amen.

The priest invites the penitent to have trust in God, in these or similar words:

**Priest:** May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy.

**Penitent:** Amen.

#### **READING OF THE WORD OF GOD *(Optional)***

**Priest:** Let us listen to the Lord as he speaks to us through the Scriptures. *(He then reads a short passage.)*

## CONFESSION OF SINS AND ACCEPTANCE OF SATISFACTION

Priest: How long has been since your last confession?

Penitent: (*Mention the amount of time since you last confessed.*)

Priest: What are your sins?

Or, the penitent can say a general formula for confession before he confesses his sins, such as:

Bless me father for I have sinned my last confession was...

Penitent: (*Confess your sins.*)

Priest: For your penance, please...

Priest: Now, please say your Act of Contrition.

Penitent: (*Say the following Act of Contrition or one you are familiar with.*)

Penitent: Lord God, I love you above all things. In your goodness have mercy on me: do not look on my sins, but take away all my guilt. Create in me a clean heart and renew within me an upright spirit.

### Other options:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Or

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because I have offended you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

**Priest:**       *(Prays the prayer of absolution.)*

*God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Penitent:**   **Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

**Priest:**       The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

**Penitent:**   **Thanks be to God.**