

## **HOW TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Before entering the Reconciliation room, take some time to examine your conscience. (following is an example)

- Have I prayed every day?
- Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?
- Have I prayed with my parents and family?
- Have I been moody and rebellious about praying and going to church on Sunday?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me whenever I have been tempted to sin?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?
- Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?
- Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- Have I been arrogant, stubborn or rebellious?
- Have I talked back to parents, teachers or other adults?
- Have I pouted and been moody?
- Have I been selfish toward my parents, brothers, and sisters, teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?
- Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone?
- Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?
- Have I treated other children with respect or have I made fun of them and called them names?
- Have I used bad language?
- Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?
- Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?
- Have I been helpful and affectionate toward my family?

Enter the Reconciliation room and either sit or kneel next to the priest.

Start with the sign of the cross ... *(In the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit)*

Then say, "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first Reconciliation." **Now name your sins.**

Then the priest will talk to you and give you a penance. It could be for you to say some prayers or that you tell somebody you're sorry.

Then the priest invites you to say the Act of Contrition.

*My God, 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.*

Then the priest will absolve you of your sins and send you on your way. It is up to you to do the penance he gave you. After that is complete, the sacrament is completed.

# How to go to Confession

Many people have avoided celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, sometimes for years at a time, because they "don't know what to do." The following brief explanation is intended for a person who has not been to confession in some time and explains how the first form of the Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated. The person who is going to confession is called a "penitent" because he or she wishes to do penance and to turn away from his or her sin.

## **Preparation**

Before going to confession, the penitent compares his or her life with the example and commandments of Christ and then prays to God for forgiveness.

## **Going to Confession**

The priest welcomes the penitent, and then both make the sign of the cross, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Next the priest briefly urges the penitent to have confidence in God.

## **Reading the Word of God**

Then the priest, or the penitent himself, may read a passage from the Bible.

## **Confession of Sins and the Act of Penance**

The penitent then confesses his sins. If necessary, the priest should help the penitent to make a complete confession and to have sincere sorrow for his sins against God. The priest then offers suitable advice to help the penitent begin a new life and, when appropriate, leads him to resolve that he will make appropriate restitution for the harm he has caused others. Then the priest imposes an act of penance or satisfaction on the penitent. Such a "penance" serves not only to make up for the past but also to help him to begin a new life and provides the penitent with an antidote to weakness.

## **The Prayer of the Penitent**

After this the penitent prays a prayer showing he is sorry for his sins and his resolve not to sin again. A card with several examples of the prayer may be provided in the confessional. The penitent may recite the prayer by heart or read it.

## **Absolution by the Priest**

Following this prayer, the priest extends his hands, or at least his right hand, over the head of the penitent and pronounces the formula of absolution. As he says the final words he makes the sign of the cross over the head of the penitent.

## **Dismissal of the Penitent**

Then the priest tells him to go in peace. The penitent continues his conversion and expresses it by a life renewed according to the Gospel and more and more steeped in the love of God, for "love covers over a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8).