



# The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) *A Sacrament of Healing*

Our serious wrongdoings leave scars on us and have the potential to change our character permanently. Other people's wrongdoings (or sins) also leave us scarred and hurting. We can experience resentment, bitterness, anger, despair, etc. Interestingly, these feelings don't hurt the person who hurt us, only ourselves. These scars of our own wrongdoing and others can be emotional and

psychological and can even have physical effects.

Most frequently people seek the help of a doctor, a psychiatrist or psychologist. A full stay in a hospital is sometimes required. Yet, the healing of that person can remain incomplete if the spiritual dimension has been neglected. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (or Confession) enables us to seek forgiveness and mercy from God for our

wrongdoing and to choose to reject our resentment, bitterness and anger towards others. It is therefore a valuable gift from God for our healing; just like doctors and specialists.

The basic requirement for a good confession is to have the intention of returning to God like the "prodigal son" and to acknowledge our sins with true sorrow before the priest.

## What happens during the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- The priest gives you a blessing or greeting. He may share a brief Scripture passage.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and say: ***"Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was..."*** (give the number of weeks, months or years).
- Confess all of your sins simply and honestly to the priest. The priest will help you to make a good confession. If you are unsure about how to confess or you feel uneasy, just ask him to help you. Answer his questions without hiding anything out of fear or shame. Place your trust in God, a merciful Father who wants to forgive you.
- Following your confession of sins, say: ***"I am sorry for these and all of my sins."***
- The priest assigns you a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
- Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.
- Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible.

### AN ACT OF CONTRITION

Oh my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, because you are so good, and with your help I will not sin again.