

# Reconciliation

## Objective:

Not been to confession in a while? Let's get re-introduced! Reconciliation is a Sacrament that many Catholics tend to exclude from their lives. Many of us grew up and "went to confession" because either our parents or teachers told us to. Going to confession was often an uncomfortable act. As a result, many Catholics stopped participating. The Roman Catholic viewpoint on reconciliation is also one of the differences in belief between Roman Catholics and other Christian religions.

**Song Suggestion:** Hosea (Blue 190, Red 405)

## Bible and Catechism Readings:

### John 20:21-23

Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.

### Matt 6:14-15

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

### 1 Jn 1:8-9

If we say, "We are without sin," we deceive ourselves,\* and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.

### Catechism 1422

"Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion."

### Catechism 1442

"Christ has willed that in her prayer and life and action his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood. But he entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the "ministry of reconciliation." The apostle is sent out "on behalf of Christ" with "God making his appeal" through him and pleading: "Be reconciled to God."

**Saint:** Padre Pio of Pietrelcina - St. Pio loved the ministry of Divine Mercy. He made himself available to thousands upon thousands through spiritual direction and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. At times, he could be a tough confessor who made people aware of the seriousness of their sins and the need for repentance.

## Vignette:

(Copied from <https://catholic-link.org/8-encouraging-and-beautiful-experiences-of-confession-that-will-inspire-you-to-visit-the-sacrament/>)

"During parish missions in the Archdiocese of Miami priests usually hold Confessions face to face. You can imagine the horror at the thought of confessing your sins while looking someone in the eyes. It's always easier to confess behind a division but for a while I've challenged myself to confess face to face. However, I

suddenly realized with one catch-Confession had to be with a priest I didn't know. Talk about confessing behind a division or wall! This Lent, a priest who is a family friend was giving the Lenten Mission at a local parish. Time for confessions came, the Holy Spirit was obviously looking to pour His mercy out in this moment because I would have never considered Confession with him, but I got up, stood in line and when it was my turn he listened intently to everything I had to say, allowing me to vent. When he finally decided to speak, he did so in a way that I never expected. He reminded me that life can be tough and it can take a toll on any of us, but there is always, always someone by our side willing to help us with our cross. There was no judgment or scolding, just mercy and love."

### Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Have you had a good reconciliation experience? If so, what made it special?

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Have you had a bad reconciliation experience? If so, what happened?

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Have you been to confession in the past 12 months? If not, why?

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### Action Plan:

1. Reflect on the following:

Why should I go to confession on a regular basis?

- The Church recommends that we go to confession at least once per year or whenever a "grave" sin is committed.
- Going more frequently, every two or three months, helps us identify our "favorite sins". If you find yourself confessing the same things over and over, you can zero in on problem behaviors and make corrective action.

How do I make a good confession?

- Try to find a good Priest to go to regularly. One that is not too tough but not too easy either.
- Pray for 15 minutes before going to confession, in front of the Blessed Sacrament if you can.
- Examination of Conscience.
- If you are not sure if something is a sin or not, it probably is. Confess it!

2. Commit to participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### Additional Resources:

[http://catholicism.about.com/od/beliefsteachings/p/Why\\_Confession.htm](http://catholicism.about.com/od/beliefsteachings/p/Why_Confession.htm)

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/sacrament-of-penance-examination-of-conscience-9121>

<http://www.integratedcatholiclife.org/2012/04/deacon-bickerstaff-catholic-response-to-common-objections-to-sacrament-of-confession/>

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