

LESSON 13: GOD'S TENDER MERCY

No sin on earth will ever be greater than God's mercy and love. God's love follows us wherever we go. Does God stop loving us when we sin? No of course not. But when we sin, we turn away from God.

Jesus told the story about a shepherd who loved his sheep. One day a lamb got lost and the shepherd did not rest until he found it. When the lamb came back, the shepherd said, "*Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep*". Jesus compared the story to His love for us: "*in the same way, there is great joy in Heaven whenever anyone is sorry for his sins.*"

Peter the apostle denied Jesus three times on the night He was betrayed. After realizing what he had done, Peter wept with sorrow; Jesus forgave him completely. Mary Magdalene, a great sinner, came up to Jesus, poured precious oil on His feet and wept for forgiveness. Jesus told everyone, "*This woman's sins are forgiven because she has loved much*".

On the first Easter Sunday night, Jesus gave His apostles the power to forgive sins in His name. The apostles were the early priests of the church. Our priests today carry the same power to forgive sins. The sacrament of Penance frees our souls of any mortal and venial sins. When we go to a priest for this sacrament, we can be sure that Christ Himself is present, and He washes away all our sins.

Words to know:

Mortal sin: A very big sin that kills all life of grace in a soul.

Venial sin: A small sin that makes a soul weak and less pleasing to God.

Grace: The life of God in our souls.

Forgiveness: The act of pardoning someone who has done something wrong.

Questions and Answers

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| 1 | <i>What happens when we sin?</i> When we sin, we turn away from God. |
| 2 | <i>Who can forgive sins?</i> Only God can forgive sins. |
| 3. | <i>What is actual sin?</i> Actual sin is a sin, which is committed voluntarily by one who has the use of reason. |
| 4. | <i>In how many ways is actual sin committed?</i> Actual sin is committed in four ways, in thoughts, in words, in deeds, and in omissions. |
| 5. | <i>How many kinds of actual sin are there?</i> Actual sin is of two kinds: mortal and venial. |

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| 6. | What is Venial sin? Venial sin is a small sin that makes a soul weak and less pleasing to God. |
| 7. | What is Mortal sin? Mortal sin is a very big sin that kills all life of grace in soul. Our relationship with God is broken. |
| 8. | Are all sins equal? Sins are not equal. And just as some venial sins are less light than others, so some mortal sins are more serious and harmful than others. |
| 9. | Does God stop loving us when we sin? No. God does not stop loving us. God is all-merciful; He desires to forgive us and restore our relationship with Him. |
| 10. | How do we rebuild our relationship with God? God gives us a way to restore our relationship: He gives us the Sacrament of Reconciliation. |

Fill in the blanks choosing the right word from the Word Bank below:

- God's love follows us wherever we _____.
- Jesus told us that He is the good shepherd and we are his _____.
- Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said "Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins they are _____.
- Only God can forgive sins. On that first _____ Sunday night, Jesus gave His Apostles the power to forgive sins in His Name.
- The Apostles were the early _____ of the Church. Our priests today have the same power to forgive sins through the sacrament of Penance.
- The sacrament of penance frees are soul of mortal sins, which remove God's life of _____ from our souls.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation frees us of less serious, _____ sins, which weaken our love towards God and our neighbor.
- When we go to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance, we can be sure that _____ Himself is present and washes away all our sins.
- God will never turn us away when we are truly sorry for our _____.

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| Sheep | Forgiven | Easter | sins | Go |
| Venial | Priests | Christ | grace | |

