

LESSON 14: MEETING JESUS IN CONFESSION

In the sacrament of Penance, we go to Jesus and tell Him we are sorry, resolve not to sin again, accept His forgiveness, and keep our friendship with Him alive and strong.

To prepare ourselves for this Sacrament of Reconciliation, first we must ask God the Holy Spirit, who lives inside us, to help us remember our sins. We must make up our minds not to commit the same sins again and say an Act of Contrition (sorrow) and kneel in the confessional for our confession.

In Confession, we tell our sins to the priest as clearly as possible. We must tell all the mortal sins we have committed, and we may also mention whatever venial sins we wish to state. Before leaving the confessional, the priest will use his Christ-given power to forgive all our sins (absolve us). We accept the absolution by answering "Amen". Every time we receive the sacrament of Penance, Jesus heals our hearts. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament because He has so much grace to give us.

Words to know:

- Examination of Conscience:** thinking about what we did to see if it was good or bad in preparation for confession.
- Penance:** a prayer we say or something we do to help make up for our sins.
- Sorrow for sins:** the love of God in our souls
- Contrition:** sorrow for sins
- Sacrament of Penance:** the sacrament in which all sins committed after Baptism are forgiven; also called Confession or Reconciliation.

Questions and Answers

1.	What is Confession? Confession is the sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to forgive the sins committed after Baptism.
2.	When was the Sacrament of Confession instituted by Jesus Christ? The Sacrament of Confession was instituted by Jesus Christ when he said to the apostles and in them to their successors: "Receive the Holy Spirit: if you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them; if you hold them bound, they are held bound" (John 20:22-23).
3.	How is the examination of conscience done? The examination of conscience is done by recalling to mind the sins we have committed in thoughts, words and omissions against the Commandments of God, beginning from our last good confession.
4.	What is sorrow? Sorrow or repentance is displeasure and hatred for the sins we have committed, which bring us to form the intention of not sinning again.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE- questions to ask yourself before going to Confession.

- How have I acted toward God? Do I think of God and speak to Him by praying to him each day?
- Do I speak of God with reverence?
- Do I go to Mass on Friday or Saturday evening or Sunday?
- Do I participate in Mass, or do I tease or distract others by laughing, talking or playing?
- Do I pay attention to my parents, priests, and teachers when they talk to me about God?
- How have I acted towards others?
- Do I obey my parents and teachers quickly and cheerfully, or must I be reminded many times?
- Do I tell my parents or those in authority over me that I am sorry and ask them to forgive me when I have not listened to them?
- Do I obey the rules of my home and school?
- Do I help my brothers, sisters, and classmates when they need my help?
- Am I kind to everyone?
- Did I hit, kick or in any way hurt others on purpose?
- Am I willing to play with everyone?
- Do I make fun or say mean things to anyone?
- Do I do all my classwork and my chores (daily work) at home well?
- Do I take care of my health by eating the right food, etc.?
- Do I think or do bad things or say bad words?
- Do I tell the truth?
- Do I say things about other people that are not true?
- Did I cheat in class or in a game?
- Did I steal or keep things that are not mine?
- Am I willing to share my things with others?
- Do I return things that I have borrowed?

The seven steps to a good confession:

1. Make the Sign of the Cross
2. Tell the priest how long it has been since my last confession
3. Confess my sins
4. Receive my penance
5. Say an Act of Contrition
6. Say Amen after receiving absolution
7. Do my *penance.

*Penance is the prayer or actions that help us make up for the wrong we have done.

Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son - Lk 15: 11-32.

Answer these questions:

How did the son hurt his father?

What happened to the son after he left his family?

Why did the son want to go back to his father?

Was the son sorry for what he had done? How do you know?

Did the father stop loving the son? How do we know?

How was their relationship fixed? How were things between them made better?