

Opens with Our Father....."forgive us our trespasses..."

At baptism, we become children of God. We join the communion of saints, the mystical body of Christ. We share divine nature with God.

At baptism, all our sins are washed away. Story of Constantine (4th century), emperor who waited to be baptized on his deathbed so he would be sinless and enter heaven. All humans, however, continue to sin; we all fall short.

These sins affect not only us, but those around us. Sin damages our relationship to God, and also our relationship to others. Our sinful acts can lead others to sin. To be unaware, or even indifferent to our sins can cause our conscience to grow numb. The Catholic Church gives us a means of counteracting sinful nature; of receiving grace that can help us overcome the tendencies of sin, and fight the tricks of the Devil. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) helps us be vigilant about sin.

It is right to go to the Father immediately for forgiveness. In scripture, John 20:21-23, Jesus said to the apostles, "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." Through apostolic succession of bishops and priests, the Church gives us a means of counteracting sinful nature and receiving God's grace to strengthen ourselves against sin.

Question about history of the sacrament: Early Church those professing sin out of the Church until the next Easter Vigil as a time of penance when action would show their contrition or sorrow for their sins. In time, the Church came to understand that sinners (as we all are) were in need closeness to the Church rather than separation. The sacrament has changed in appearance through time.

Question about how to receive the sacrament: Irene responded that there would be subsequent lesson on "how".

SIN

Three criteria for an action to be sinful: 1) to know it is a sin, 2) to want to do the action, and 3) to do it.

Venial sin (see text p. 237) harms our relationship with God, but does not destroy.

Mortal sin is more serious and turn us away, separates us from God.

You bring both kinds to confession.

Examples of mortal sins include

- pride - different than pride of country. This pride puts us at the center of our world, removing God as God.
- envy - be satisfied with your own gifts.
- gluttony - not just about food. Gluttony of enjoyment, indulgence. Binge.
- greed
- anger - Be gentle with children. Degree of anger may range from venial to mortal sin.
- lust - sins of the flesh. Entertaining sexual ideas. Reducing the gift of humanity to body parts.
- sloth - Idle hands are the devil's workshop. Gross indifference is a degree of sloth, e.g. turning a blind eye to actions that are bad. Need to recycle.

Mortal sin is like the picture of Jesus knocking on the door that only we can be open from the inside. "Forgive me Lord, for taking so long to answer."

Examination of conscience takes place before going to Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Ignatian practice of 'examen' is a way of daily assessing your relationship to God and others.

Contrition is to be truly sorry, and is a condition of good confession.

Penance is the action assigned by the priest to the one confessing to give a sense of atonement for wrongdoing. It is an act to begin anew.

Absolution - The priest acts "in persona Christi", in the person of Christ, just as he does during the consecration time at Mass when he speaks in first person: "...this is my body...". By the grace of God and the power of the Church, the priest acts as Christ to forgive the sin.

Seal of confession The priest cannot reveal under any circumstances the sins he hears confessed during the sacrament. The priest CAN assign as part of the penance that the one confessing continue discussion on the sin outside of the sacrament. If the one confessing (the penitent) does not complete the penance, then there is no absolution.

Question about do you have to go to confession every time you get angry. No, until it separates you from God and/or others.

Question about forgiveness of heinous sins committed by convicts. Father offered the Bible story of the Prodigal Son. God rejoices over the return of a sinful child.

Grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation can be healing.

Spiritual direction is spiritual guidance like a counsellor is for secular problems.

Presentation concluded with a blessing.