

# **Mysterious Encounters: Unveiling the Power of the Sacraments**

## **Week 4: Reconciliation**

1. Review of salvation history
  - a. Creation of humanity: Genesis 1:27
  - b. The Fall: Genesis 3
  - c. The Paschal Mystery
2. Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick  
*(Catechism of the Catholic Church 1420-1532)*
3. Concupiscence: For Christians, “there are water and tears: the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance.” (Saint Ambrose)
4. Effects of sin
5. Mortal vs. venial sin: 1 John 5:16-17
6. Institution of the sacrament: John 20:19-23
7. Ministers of the sacrament
8. Seal of the confessional (“sacramental seal”)
9. Required acts for the penitent
10. Elements of the sacrament
  - a. Matter

## b. Form

- i. Latin rite: “God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- ii. A Byzantine formula: “May the same God, who through the Prophet Nathan forgave David when he confessed his sins, who forgave Peter when he wept bitterly, the prostitute when she washed his feet with her tears, the Pharisee, and the prodigal son, through me, a sinner, forgive you both in this life and in the next and enable you to appear before his awe-inspiring tribunal without condemnation, he who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.”

11. Effects of the sacrament
12. Steps for going to confession

## How To Go To Confession

(take this sheet with you... it's okay, really)

### Before You Go...

**Examine your conscience**, that is, reflect on what sins you have committed. To guide you, just Google “examination of conscience” and you’ll find many resources to help you. It’s even alright to **make a list** to bring with you to confession if that helps.

**1. Introduction.** When you come before the priest, begin by making the **Sign of the Cross** (praying the words out loud), and continue by saying,  
“**Bless me, Father, I have sinned. It has been           (how long)           since my last confession. These are my sins...**”

**2. Confession.** List the sins you have committed that came to mind when doing your examination of conscience. **Don’t be too general** (like, “I haven’t been a good person”), but a lot of **detail is not necessary** either (you don’t need to tell the whole story of how a sin came about). If you’re not sure if something is a sin is, just ask the priest. This isn’t counseling, so unless you ask, the priest likely won’t give you advice. He’ll just move on to...

**3. Penance.** The priest will suggest **something for you to do or pray** as a response to God’s mercy. You’ll have to remember what this is and do it after the confession is over, so pay attention.

**4. Contrition.** The priest will then ask you to pray your “Act of Contrition,” demonstrating your sorrow for your sins. This needs to be prayed out loud for the priest to hear, but need not adhere exactly to one formula. Here are two examples (choose the one that suits you best) :

### ACT OF CONTRITION

*My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against You whom I should love  
above all things. I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance, to sin no more, and  
to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.*

OR:

*O my God, I am heartily sorry  
for having offended you and I detest all my sins,  
because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell;  
but most of all because they offend you, my God,  
who are all good and deserving of all my love.  
I firmly resolve with the help of your grace,  
to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.*

**5. Absolution.** Don’t get up to leave after that prayer, because the best part is yet to come: the priest will extend his hands in your direction and he will pray the **Prayer of Absolution**: “*God, the Father of Mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church, may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*”  
**You respond: Amen.**

**6. Conclusion.** The priest will then likely say something like, “God has freed you from your sin. Go in Peace.” To which you can respond: “**Thanks be to God.**”

### After You Leave...

Don’t forget to **do your penance**. If it is saying certain prayers, it’s best to do it right away in the church before you forget.

# A Brief Examination of Conscience

## *Based on the Ten Commandments*



### **I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.**

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

### **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

### **Remember to keep holy the LORD's Day.**

Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1; the Ascension; Aug. 15; Nov. 1; Dec. 8; Dec. 25)? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

### **Honor your father and your mother.**

Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

### **You shall not kill.**

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

### **You shall not commit adultery.**

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

### **You shall not steal.**

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

### **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

### **Christ's Two Commandments**

How well do we love God and others? Do we love as Christ calls us to? In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ gives us Two Commandments: "He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments'" (Mt 22:37-40).

Not sure what love is? St. Paul describes it for us in his Letter to the Corinthians. Is this how you love God and others? "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

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*Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation*