



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

FIDE

Heart & Soul

Monthly Catechetical Resource

Confession

Issue 7 | December 2022 | Vol.1

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Introduction

Welcome to the 7th issue of this year's *Heart & Soul: Monthly Catechetical Resource*! In this month we will be learning about the Sacrament of Confession (also called Reconciliation). In starting the new year we have decided to take a different approach to *Heart and Soul* by directing it to parents only. The idea is to use Heart and Soul to refresh your memory of the topic being discussed so you can help your kids understand it. That being said, based on feedback, we will now be providing weekly lessons and resources that can help you discuss the topic with your child. We believe this will make FIDE be more user friendly for parents so that teaching/talking to their children about the faith can be easier and more enjoyable. These lessons will be called *Heart and Soul Lessons* and they will be separate from the *Heart and Soul: Catechetical Resource* booklet. You will be able to access *Heart and Soul Lessons* when I email them out, but you can also access them on our website. You will also find hard copies in the back of the Church or can request a hard copy in the parish office.

In this issue of *Heart and Soul* you will find my “Top 3 Resources” to refresh your memory on what Confession is. From there we will explore the Church’s teachings as well as what Scripture has to say about Confession. As usual, there will be a resource page (to explore the topic further if you wish), a page of feast days and how to celebrate them, and an events page . Lastly, as always, your SAP and I, the Director of Evangelization (EJ), are at your service. Feel free to contact me at ecerdeiras@shcatholic.org if you have any questions about Confession.



EJ's Top 3 Resources to Refresh Your Knowledge of Confession

1 - In the video below (link and QR Code) Fr. Mike Schmitz reveals what Confession is and why it is joyful Sacrament that needs to be part of our lives.

Link- [Confession is a Place of Victory](#)

QR CODE:



2 - In the video below, Fr. Mike Schmitz explains the difference between a mortal and venial sins and why we need to go to Confession when we commit mortal sin and why we ought to still confess venial sins.

Link- [Mortal vs. Venial Sin](#)

QR Code:



3 - *Ascension Presents* explains how to Confess like an adult. We are often taught about Confession once as children, but are not taught how to mature in this Sacrament as we get older. In this article you will find advice and resources that can help you learn how to confess like and adult.

Link - [How to Confess Like an Adult](#)

QR Code:



What is Confession?

Confession is a Sacrament that expresses the love and mercy of God. It is in the Sacrament of Confession that we ask God for forgiveness for our sins. By confessing our sins we strive for a life of conversion and penance. To this the Catechism of the Catholic Church elaborates in stating, "It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin. It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction" (CCC 1423). Sin can wound and even break our relationship with God. However, even when we deny and choose to wound and break our relationship with God, He is still calling to us to come back to Him because of His unconditional love for us. However, in order to accept God's call back to Him, we need to be willing to convert from our sinfulness so that we can truly embrace Him. Penance then manifests our desire and efforts to engage in this conversion and draw closer to God by both act and will.

As I mentioned before, sin can either wound or break our relationship with God. The distinction between wounding our relationship with God and breaking our relationship with God lies on whether the sin is a venial sin or a mortal sin. Let's break these two down and then explain why it is important to confess them:

Venial Sin

Venial sins are sins that wound our relationship with God, but does not break our relationship with God. A venial sin is normally committed when one goes against moral law (law in our hearts that tells us right from wrong) without full knowledge or consent. Even if the act is a grave matter, if it is done without full knowledge or consent

the sin remains venial.

For example, if one was told by his friends to steal an apple or else they would beat him up, it would most likely be a venial sin because he did not have full consent in performing this act, though the act remains immoral.

Mortal Sin

Mortal sins are sins that break our relationship by ignoring his teachings and engaging in acts or thoughts that are a grave matter, done with full knowledge that it is a sin, and done with full consent. The Catechism tells us that a grave matter is a sin that directly contradicts the Ten Commandments. Therefore, any sin that violates the Ten Commandments and is done with full knowledge, and consent is a mortal sin. These sins are considered mortal because if we die in a state of mortal sin we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

What to Confess?

One must confess mortal sins in the Sacrament of Confession. Since mortal sins break our relationship with God they can only be removed in the Sacrament of Confession by a priest, to whom Christ gave authority to remove mortal sins. It is taught by the Church that if one dies in the state of mortal sin that they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those in the state of mortal sin should not receive Holy Communion (see page 7 for more explanation).

Venial sins on the other hand can be forgiven through prayer and receiving the Eucharist (as long as you are truly sorry for the sin). Confessing venial sins is not technically required, but strongly encouraged as it is good to verbally lay them at the feet of God so they do not build up.

Why Confess to a Priest?

It has become a common question, especially if we have Protestant friends, as to why Catholics have to confess to a priest. Below we will give three reasons why Catholics need to confess to a priest.

1) It says so in Scripture. In John 20:22-23 Jesus states, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” In this verse, Christ gives the Apostles the authority to forgive sins in the Church and continue His ministry on earth. To clarify, only Christ has the authority to forgive sins, however, He extends that authority to the Apostles and their successors. Thus, since Christ extended His authority to the

Apostles, we know it is His will that we confess our sins to a priest since they have been given authority to forgive

2) The priest is standing in *Persona Christi* (in the person of Christ). By the priest standing in the Person of Christ, we are actually confessing our sins to Christ through the priest who is the representative of Christ as well as the Church (since our sins affect the Body of Christ as well).

3) Because it satisfies our human nature. By giving the priest the authority to forgive sins, Jesus recognizes that we are social beings and need human attention, guidance, and the ability to hear the words “You are Forgiven.” By confessing to a priest Jesus is able to work through the priest to make the experience of confession truly forgiving and truly satisfying.



What Does Scripture Say About Confession?

Below are two Scripture passages on Confession. Under each passage there will be a short reflection

2 Corinthians 5: 17-21

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Reflection

In this passage, we see that Paul is explaining how God desires us to be reconciled back to Him. Therefore, He sends His Son, Jesus, to conquer sin through His life, death, and resurrection. However, to continue to fulfill His desire of us being reconciled to Him, Christ gives the Apostles the ministry of reconciliation. That way God’s desire for us to be reconciled to Him can be given to us throughout our lives and to all the generations. Even if we continuously fail, God desires us to be with Him so much that He gave us the Sacrament of Confession to show that His forgiving mercy is infinite.

1 Corinthians 11: 27-29

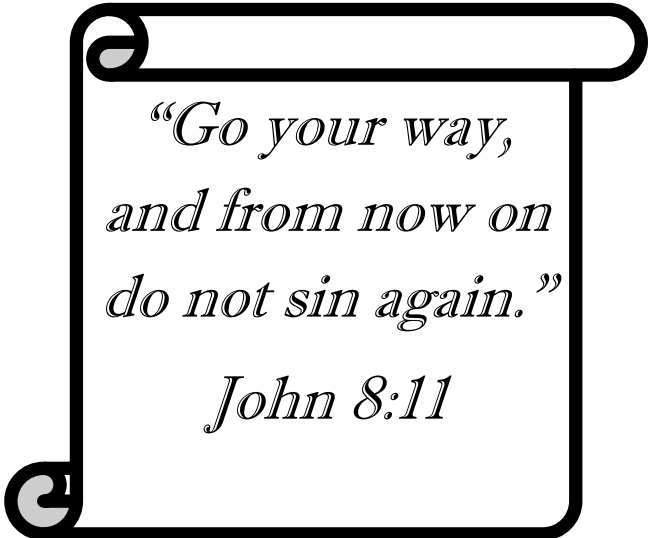
“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves,

and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.”

Reflection

This is a very important passage in regard to Confession. In the passage Paul is addressing those who come to receive Communion when they are in a state of mortal sin. He explains that those who receive Communion in a state of mortal sin “eat and drink judgment against themselves.” What this means is that the Eucharist, when eaten in a worthy state (without guilt of sin), bestows the grace, love, and mercy of God within them. However, when we eat the Eucharist in a state of sin, God cannot work in us and because we do not care for Him to work in us. Therefore, consuming the Eucharist will only make our sin multiply since consuming the Eucharist in a state of sin is a sin in and of itself

For this reason, St. Paul says we need to examine our conscience (examine if we have mortally sinned) before receiving Communion, and if we have, then we need to go to Confession before we receive Communion.



*“Go your way,
and from now on
do not sin again.”*

John 8:11

Feast Days and How to Celebrate Them

Note: Listed below are feast days and memorials of some saints. Not all memorials for the month are listed.

- **January 1st - Feast of Mary, The Mother of God**
 - ♦ Read about the Feast Day [here](#)
 - ♦ Put Flowers in front of a statue or image of Mary holding Jesus (if you have a icon or statute of Mary being pregnant, display and decorate that)
 - ♦ Read [Canticle of Zechariah](#) (reminds us who Mary gave birth to)
- **January 4th - The Epiphany**
 - ♦ Read about the Epiphany [Here](#)
 - ♦ Do a [House Blessing](#) with your Family (If house has never been blessed, request a house blessing from a priest)
 - ♦ [6 Traditional Ways to Celebrate the Epiphany](#)
- **January 25th - Conversion of St. Paul**
 - ♦ Read story of St. Paul's Conversion in Acts 9:1-19
 - ♦ Bake [Horse Shoe Cookies](#)
- **January 28th - St. Thomas Aquinas**
 - ♦ Read About St. Thomas Aquinas [Here](#)
 - ♦ Bake [Star Shaped Cookies](#) (The star was a symbol used for St. Thomas Aquinas as it represents the guidance he received from God in his work)
- **January 31st - St. John Bosco**
 - ♦ Read About St. John Bosco [Here](#)
 - ♦ Go to a fun event as a family (bowling, mini golf, etc.) then say three Hail Mary's after
 - ♦ Do a family talent show
 - ♦ Say three Hail Mary's before going to bed (it was a tradition that St. John Bosco had the boys he ministered to do before bed)

Resources on Confession

Adult Resources

- [Article that gives the basics on what Confession is](#)
- [How to Make a Good Confession - John Kane](#) (Great little book to have).
- [Fr. Mike Schmitz on Confession](#)
- [Dr. Brant Pitre on Confession](#)
- [USCCB - Examination of Conscience for all ages and situations of life](#)

Resources for Teens

- [Fr. Mike Schmitz on Making a Good Confession](#)
- [Catholic Central on Confession](#)
- [Examination of Conscience for Teens](#)

Resources for Middle School aged children

- [How to Make a Good First Confession](#)
- [Examination of Conscience for Children](#)
- [Project for Learning About First Confession](#)
- [Going to Confession: How to Make a Good Confession](#) (Book)
- [First Reconciliation Activity Book](#)
- [Act of Contrition Coloring Page](#)

Resources for Young Children

- [Brother Francis on Confession](#)
- [My Confession Book](#)
- [Act of Contrition Coloring Page](#)

Church Teachings on Confession

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church on Confession](#)
- [Confession in the Early Church](#)

Commonly Ask Questions and Concerns About Confession

Why Confess to a Priest?

- [Good Catholic Explains Why You Need to Confess to a Priest](#)
- [Chris Stefanick on Why We Confess to Priests](#)
- [Jimmy Akin in Why Catholics Confess to Priests](#)

Is it Normal to Confess the Same Sins Over and Over Again?

- [Matt Fradd on Confessing the Same Sins Again and Again](#)
- [Fr. Mike Schmitz on Why We Confess the Same Sins Often](#)

What Do I Do if I Have Not Gone to Confession in a Long Time/Forgot My Sins?

- [Fr. Mike Schmitz on How to Confess if You Have Not Gone in a While](#)
- [Does God Forgive Sins If I Forget to Confess?](#)

Why Confessing Mortal Sins is So Important?

- [Short Article on Why We Need to Confess Mortal Sins](#)
- [What is Mortal Sin and What is Venial Sin?](#)

Advice for Those Who Suffer From Scrupulosity

- [5 Ways to Fight Scrupulosity](#)

Tips and Talking Points on Talking to Your Kids About Confession

Tips

- 1) Work on asking for forgiveness and forgiving each other in your daily life. That way you are helping each other grow in a habit of seeking and granting forgiveness.
- 2) If your kids are of age to go to Confession I would suggest going as a family once a month and then do something fun as a family after. That way your children know that this is not only something that is part of their life, but a joyful Sacrament.
- 3) Before Confession encourage each other to examine their conscience privately.
- 4) If you are going to Confession do not be afraid to invite your spouse and children to come with you (just do not force them).
- 5) Always explain to your kids why you go to Confession and why it is important. That way they know the meaning as to why they go to Confession and do not just go because they are told to.

Talking Point

Here are 5 talking points that you can discuss as a family throughout the month

- 1) What do you think forgiving someone means?
- 2) Do you feel it is hard to ask for forgiveness? (why or why not)
- 3) Do you believe God forgives us? (follow up with how? Or, if the answer is no, then ask why?)
- 4) Why do you think we confess to a priest?
- 5) Do you ever feel ashamed or scared to go to Confession? (if they do then emphasize that they have nothing to be ashamed about since God forgives all sins and the priest has most like heard every sin in the book. So they can feel comfortable confessing any sin that may be in their heart).

Events For January

January 7th

First Saturday

- First Saturday Rosary (7:25am)
- First Saturday Meditation (8:30am)

Wednesdays of January

Mass/Adoration/Confession

- Mass starts at 5:15, followed by adoration and confession

Throughout January

Podcasts on Confession (Both in English and Spanish)

- Video podcasts on prayer will be released every month to discuss the topic of the month. These podcasts can be found on YouTube and our Podcast outlets. All podcasts will be directed toward adults, but will be kid friendly as well.

January 26th

Catechism Series (3:30pm)

- Fr. Eckert and Michael Becker discuss a section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (live on FB and YouTube at 3:30pm)

January 28th

First Confession Retreat (8am-12pm)

A retreat for those who are candidates to receive First Communion. This is required for those who will be receiving First Communion in May.

What's Coming in February

Heart & Soul Topic for February: Anointing of the Sick

- What Is Anointing of the Sick?
- Who Can Receive Anointing of the Sick?
- When Can I Receive Anointing of the Sick?
- Where is Anointing of the Sick in Scripture?
- And more!

Events in February

- First Saturday: February 4th
- First Friday Adoration: February 3rd-4th
- Every Wednesday in February: Mass/Adoration/Confession starting with Mass at 5:15pm.
- Podcasts Discussing Confession: Throughout February
- Catechism Series: February 2nd @3:30pm
- First Confessions: February 18th @10am

For more information, and to access hyperlinks, scan the QR code on the bottom right, or follow the instructions below to get access on our website:

salisburycatholic.org → *FIDE* → *Heart and Soul: Monthly Catechetical Resource*



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