

## Sacraments of Healing

### **1. What are the Sacraments of Healing?**

There are two sacraments of healing: sacrament of penance and sacrament of anointing of the sick.

### **2. Why did Christ institute the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick?**

Christ, the physician of our soul and body, instituted these sacraments because the new life that he gives us in the sacraments of Christian initiation can be weakened and even lost because of sin. Therefore, Christ willed that his Church should continue his work of healing and salvation by means of these two sacraments.

## The Sacrament of Penance/Confession

### **1. What is the name of this sacrament?**

It is called the sacrament of Penance, the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of Forgiveness, the sacrament of Confession, and the sacrament of Conversion.

### **2. Why is there a sacrament of Reconciliation after Baptism?**

Since the new life of grace received in Baptism does not abolish the weakness of human nature nor the inclination to sin, Christ instituted this sacrament for the conversion of the baptized who have been separated from him by sin.

### **3. When did he institute this sacrament?**

The risen Lord instituted this sacrament on the evening of Easter when he showed himself to his apostles and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22-23).

### **4. Do the baptized have need of conversion?**

The call of Christ to conversion continues to resound in the lives of the baptized. Conversion is a continuing obligation for the whole Church. She is holy but includes sinners in her midst.

### **5. What are the essential elements of the sacrament of Reconciliation?**

The essential elements are two: *the acts of the penitent* who comes to repentance through the action of the Holy Spirit, and *the absolution of the priest* who in the name of Christ grants forgiveness and determines the ways of making satisfaction.

### **6. What are the acts of the penitent?**

They are: a careful *examination of conscience*; *contrition* which is perfect when it is motivated by love of God and imperfect if it rests on other motives and which includes the determination not to sin again; *confession*, which consists in the telling of one's sins to the priest; and *satisfaction* or the carrying out of certain acts of penance which the confessor imposes upon the penitent to repair the damage caused by sin.

### **7. Which sins must be confessed?**

All grave sins not yet confessed, which a careful examination of conscience brings to mind, must be brought to the sacrament of Penance. The confession of serious sins is the only ordinary way to obtain forgiveness.

**8. When is a person obliged to confess mortal sins?**

Each of the faithful who has reached the age of discretion is bound to confess his or her mortal sins at least once a year and always before receiving Holy Communion.

**9. Why can venial sins also be the object of sacramental confession?**

The confession of venial sins is strongly recommended by the Church, even if this is not strictly necessary, because it helps us to form a correct conscience and to fight against evil tendencies. It allows us to be healed by Christ and to progress in the life of the Spirit.

**10. Who is the minister of this sacrament?**

Christ has entrusted the ministry of Reconciliation to his apostles, to the bishops who are their successors and to the priests who are the collaborators of the bishops, all of whom become thereby instruments of the mercy and justice of God. They exercise their power of forgiving sins *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*.

**11. To whom is the absolution of some sins reserved?**

The absolution of certain particular grave sins (like those punished by excommunication) is reserved to the Apostolic See or to the local bishop or to priests who are authorized by them. Any priest, however, can absolve a person who is in danger of death from any sin of excommunication.

**12. Is a confessor bound to secrecy?**

Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to people every confessor, without any exception and under very severe penalties, is bound to maintain “the sacramental seal” which means absolute secrecy about the sins revealed to him in confession.

**13. What are the effects of this sacrament?**

The effects of the sacrament of Penance are: reconciliation with God and therefore the forgiveness of sins; reconciliation with the Church; recovery, if it has been lost, of the state of grace; remission of the eternal punishment merited by mortal sins, and remission, at least in part, of the temporal punishment which is the consequence of sin; peace, serenity of conscience and spiritual consolation; and an increase of spiritual strength for the struggle of Christian living.

## Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Confession:

1. Make the sign of the cross and say;

***“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.”***

2. The priest will give you a blessing. Then tell the priest when your last confession was;

***“It has been \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months since my last confession. I am a single/married/  
consecrated person.”***

3. Begin your confession. Tell the priest the sins that you remember. Start with the most difficult ones to say; it will be easier to say the rest.

***“These are my sins \_\_\_\_\_”***

- If you are feeling unsure or uneasy, it is okay to ask the priest to help you.
- If you do not remember any serious sins, confess at least some of your venial sins.

4. Once you have confessed all of your sins you can say;

***“For these, and all of my sins I am truly sorry.”***

5. The priest will then assign some penance and may give you some advice to help you become a better Christian. He may ask you to say an *Act of Contrition* before or during the absolution. At the end of his absolution you may answer “*Amen*”

There are many different Acts of Contrition, one you may use is:

### **Act of Contrition:**

Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all of my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my Lord and God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more

## **The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick**

### **1. What is Anointing of the Sick?**

Anointing of the Sick is one of the seven sacraments of the Church, instituted by Jesus as a means of salvation for His people. This sacrament was instituted by Jesus Christ and is attested by Saint James: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call in the presbyters (priests) of the Church and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14-15)

### **2. Who is this sacrament for?**

Anointing of the Sick is intended for those baptised Catholics who, because of sickness or old age, are in danger of death. The faithful who receive this sacrament can receive it several times if their illness becomes worse or another serious sickness afflicts them. The celebration of this sacrament should, if possible, be preceded by individual confession on the part of the sick person.

### **3. Who administers this sacrament?**

This sacrament can be administered only by priests (bishops and presbyters).

### **4. How is this sacrament celebrated?**

The celebration of this sacrament consists essentially in an anointing with oil which may be blessed by the bishop. The anointing is on the forehead and on the hands of the sick person (in the Roman rite) or also on other parts of the body (in other rites) accompanied by the prayer of the priest who asks for the special grace of this sacrament.

### **5. What are the effects of this sacrament?**

This sacrament confers a special grace which unites the sick person more intimately to the Passion of Christ for his good and for the good of all the Church. It gives comfort, peace, courage, and even the forgiveness of sins if the sick person is not able to make a confession. Sometimes, if it is the will of God, this sacrament even brings about the restoration of physical health. In any case this Anointing prepares the sick person for the journey to the Father’s House.

### **6. What is Viaticum?**

Viaticum is the Holy Eucharist received by those who are about to leave this earthly life and are preparing for the journey to eternal life. Communion in the body and blood of Christ who died and rose from the dead, received at the moment of passing from this world to the Father, is the seed of eternal life and the power of the resurrection.