

John 20: 20-23

“Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Acts required of the Penitent:

1. Contrition - “sorrow and resolution not to sin again.”

2. Confession of our sins- We must confess all mortal sins, and while not required confession of venial sins highly recommended.

Venial sins – are the less serious sins, they are minor violations of the moral law. Venial comes from the Latin word *venia* which means pardonable or forgivable. They are still sins because they wound charity in our hearts and weaken the soul but we aren’t required to confess them.

“While he is in the flesh, man cannot help but have at least some light sins. But do not despise these sins which we call “light”. If you take them for light when you weigh them, tremble when you count them. A number of light objects makes a great mass; a number of drops fills a river; a number of grains makes a heap. When then is our hope? Above all, confession.” St. Augustine

Quotes/analogy: You don’t just wake up one morning and go out and commit mortal sins. You have to practice first with venial sins. Or another analogy, venial sins are like small specks of dirt on a window. If you continue to clean the window, you’ll always have Light shining through, but if you never clean the window, eventually it will lead to the total darkness of mortal sin.

Mortal sins, on the other hand, are serious sins. Just as a mortal wound kills the body, a mortal sin kills the divine life within us –the divine life that we received at Baptism.

Three Conditions for a Sin to be a Mortal Sin:

1. It must be of a grave or serious matter which is specified by the 10 commandments.
2. We must have full knowledge of the sinful character of the act and its opposition to God’s law. (Feigning ignorance doesn’t help – makes it worse.)
3. We must give it our deliberate consent – it must be our personal choice.

3. Penance – Priest has the authority to decide what your penance will be - Do what is possible to repair the harm to others (ex. return stolen goods), but sin also damages and weakens our soul so must work to recover our spiritual health. “reestablish the habits befitting a disciple of Christ.”

“It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear.”CCC1460

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Effects of the Sacrament

- Reconciliation with God and the return of grace
- Reconciliation with the Church
- Remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sin
- Remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin
- Peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation
- Increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle (CCC 1496)

Recommendations:

1. Catechism:

- Particular topic
- Section on the 10 Commandments

2. Examinations of Conscience

3. Read the lives of the saints – Compared to Whom?

4. Read the Bible and meditate on God’s word (living Word of God)

5. Spend time in prayer – Time of silence for God to speak

6. Go to Confession – Is this a sin? Frequent confession makes you dig deeper.

Recommended articles:

Comprehensive look at Confession:

<https://www.fisheaters.com/penance.html>

Early Church Fathers on Confession:

<https://www.catholic.com/tract/confession>

How to talk about Confession:

<https://www.catholic.com/index.php/magazine/print-edition/how-to-talk-about-confession>

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/how-to-defend-the-sacrament-of-confession>

Old Testament Foreshadowing of Christ and Confession:

Leviticus and the True Sacrifice:

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=9216>

Adam/Eve etc.

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/sacraments/reconciliation/old-testament-events-prefigure-the-sacrament-of-reconciliation>

Confession in Scripture:

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/is-confession-in-scripture>

<https://www.scripturecatholic.com/sacrament-confession-forgiveness-sins/>

<http://www.catholicfaithandreason.org/confession-of-sins---how-biblical-is-it.html>

History of the Sacrament of Penance:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11618c.htm>

<https://qmbarque.com/2013/10/30/the-origins-of-mandatory-private-confession-in-the-catholic-church/>

<https://www.saintjamesrcc.org/faith-devotions/sacraments/penance/public-penance-in-the-early-church/>

The Seal of the Confessional:

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/catholic-faith/the-seal-of-the-confessional.html>