

## Why and How We Confess

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### Notes For Servants:

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### Objectives:

#### General:

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### Instructions:

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### Bible Verse:

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,  
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

(1 John 1:9)

### Lesson:

## Why and How We Confess

### PRACTISING CONFESSION

Pardon me father, but sometimes I walk out of confession without the feeling of any improvement to my spiritual life. I don't feel the joy one receives after his sins are forgiven. A surrender to sins already confessed usually follows. Can you please help me?

The last step in the sacrament of penance is confession. However, some people think that all is required for penance is confession. This is a bad satanic tricky because the sacrament of penance is not a mere narration, of the sins and evils you have done, a slow or a quick account is not

the point. It certainly is not to bring yourself to the presbyter's presence to ask for the absolution without a sincere profound revelation of yourself to God. It is a sacred sacrament we practice an consecutive stages.

### **The First Stage: Penance for Sins**

As you stand in reverence to God, go through the sins you committed, one by one; including the bad habits and inclinations. Reproach yourself because you sinned to God by committing these sins. You were not fair to the pure name called upon you, nor to your past promises to God. In other words, stand with feelings of regret, sorrow and dissatisfaction over the actions that should not belong to whom Christ died for. Say to yourself in remorse for sins, "How can you, my soul, abandon God's grace to commit these sins and impurities? The grace of our Lord is pure, capable and abundant. How can I sell these valuables and prefer the vile and despicable? What could have happened if my life ended while in sin and I deem deserving eternal shame and death?"

### **The Second Stage: The Revival of Faith**

The revival of faith in Christ-the Lover of mankind who accepts sinners and can forgive their sins. He will never look down on me because of the impurity of my sins; but would rather accept my repentance for the sake of His overwhelming love.

### **The Third Stage: Repentance**

Offer God in prayer the feeling of cordial repentance for all you've done. "Lord, forgive this sin, I have sinned against heaven and before You, and now, with all my heart I am renouncing this sin, please help so that I do not go back to it", and so forth. You offer repentance for every sin you committed, one by one with a humble heart, the Lord accepts your repentance and counts you worthy to offer confession to the presbyter and receive his absolution for your sins.

Be aware that a correction of the results of your sins is one of the signs of your repentance for them. If you misbehaved towards someone, go and make peace with him. If you were unfair to anyone, start being fair to him. If you took hold of someone's right, give it back following the example of Zacchaeus who deserved salvation for himself and his house. And if you caused someone to sin or sinned with someone, put an unconditional end to all causes, aspects and links to this sin and walk back to Christ absolutely free.

### **The Fourth Stage: Confession**

After you have offered the feelings of sorrow and repentance, come to your Father of confession with faith and in love of our Saviour and His remission of sins. The Lord gave him the awesome authority "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt 18:18) Say your confession humbly and with a contrite heart ask for the Lord's forgiveness and mercy.

Putting the cross on your head, the presbyter will pray the absolution and ask the Lord to forgive your sins. The Lord who granted this authority is honest and faithful, He will purify you and you will go home justified.

Those who go straight to confession without repentance, penance or revival of faith can not certainly feel the abundant bliss of exercising confession. They simply think that all they need to do is to give an account of their mistakes without an actual repentance for them before getting the absolution. They lose a wonderful opportunity of the purification of their souls and their lives and will never feel the joy of penance.

## **BEFORE CONFESSION:**

After you had sorrowed enough, activated your faith then decided to repent, I advise the following:

1- Try to remember everything you want to say to your father of confession. You can write them down on a piece of paper.

2- Pray deeply so the Lord gives you the blessing of a contrite confession to receive the remission of sins.

3- Don't think of any worldly matter, but concentrate on getting rid of your sins. Spend some time on reading a book that induces repentance and institutes you in grace and help yourself by praying a pre-confession prayers.

## **DURING CONFESSION:**

Approach the presbyter humbly. Avoid all laughter and jolliness as you say your confession. Be honest in your confession, simply say the truth.

Don't apologize for any sin you committed and don't blame your responsibility for it on others, on the circumstances or human weakness. Don't be little your sins, for instance do not say, "I said a couple of white lies" or "Unwillingly, I swore or cursed" This is not the style a repenting confessor would use.

Don't make your confession vague: "Father all of us are sinful." This is not a good confession; likewise, "NO one is free from sin", "I committed every sin father", or "I did the usual sins, Father."

This is not confession, it is carelessness and a way out of shameful confession. Confess seriously admitting your sin.

Sometimes one may go to the priest and say, "I didn't do anything father, please give me the absolution." One who justifies himself has not yet learned to humble himself to God. He needs the presbyters guidance to confess and by varying questions, he can explain to him that he has many sins and it is only God who is without sin.

Don't make confession a philosophic debate or an entertainment session or use it as a chance to test the priest's knowledge. Confess meekly, predetermined to accept the directions of the priest and his discipline.

Don't be ashamed to confess. Your father's love can guide you about how to confess and what to say. If you have any difficulty, tell him he can think of a way to help you.

Usually, the presbyter gives some direction to the confessor; It is important here to know there is a difference between confession and counseling. It is not necessary that directions be given with every confession. First confess what you have and let the presbyter select the advice and spiritual discipline he sees proper for you..

## **AS YOU TAKE THE ABSOLUTION:**

While receiving the absolution of the priest, i.e. before you receive the absolution, tell your father to please forgive the sins you mentioned and those you do not remember.

Bow your head down with regret and poise, and hope in the Lord's forgiveness. Understand that you will receive forgiveness. Understand that you will receive forgiveness from God Himself through your confession father, and that your sins will be demolished.

While your father gives the absolution secretly, pray a psalm suitable to repentance. "Have mercy upon me, O God according to your loving kindness" or "O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger."

## **AFTER CONFESSION:**

Offer a thanksgiving prayer to God who saved you and took you out of the pit. Be determined to renew your life through God's help and carry out all the directions, disciplinary ideas, and exercises your father of confession provides.

Do not become involved in social conversations with others, rather stay quiet providing yourself some time for spiritual meditation. Be very careful in everything you do, for you don't want to return to the things you've already confessed. This way you will feel the blessings of this great sacrament.

**Conclusion:**

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