The Sacrament of Reconciliation
Topics for this Session

- The nature of sin and our relationship to God
- About the conscience
- Overview of reconciliation and anointing of the sick
- Biblical references
- The Reconciliation process
- How the sacrament is validly contracted
- Examination of conscience
- The penitential life
- Emotions and confession
Concupiscence - Human appetites or desires which remain disordered due to the temporal consequences of original sin, which remain even after Baptism, and which produce an inclination to sin.

- Our default inclination is toward Hell.

Sin - “an offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth and right conscience. Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God” (CCC 1849, 1853)

- Mortal sin – A sin that kills the life of Christ within us.
- Venial sin – A sin that injures the life of Christ within us and will naturally lead to mortal sin.
To commit a mortal sin:
- The sinner must *deliberately* act or omit action.
- The sin must be *objectively* grave/serious in matter.
- The sinner must *know* the sin is serious prior to committing the sin.

You cannot retroactively commit a mortal sin.
- I find out tomorrow that something I did was a serious sin, it is not mortal.

A misinformed conscience will betray you.
- An action does not become okay because you exercised your conscience. It must be a well-formed conscience.
- The Church defines many things as objectively sinful.

Act with caution! Don’t play with fire!
- When in doubt, always err on the side of caution.
The Basics

- **Reconciliation** - The sacramental celebration in which, through God’s mercy and forgiveness, the sinner is reconciled with God and also with the Church, Christ’s Body, which is wounded by sin
  - Those in a state of mortal sin must go to confession to receive absolution.
  - Frequent the sacrament and strive for holiness

- **Anointing of the Sick** – a sacrament given to those who are in danger of death from sickness or old age. (CCC 1514)
  - It is even fitting to receive the sacrament prior to a serious surgery. (CCC 1515)
  - Effects – wipes away sins, gives strength, peace and courage facing the condition, the gift of uniting the person to Christ’s Passion, contribution to the sanctification of the Church, and preparation for the final journey.
Don’t Apologize for Apologetics

- **Matt 18:18-19**: Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

- **John 20:21-23**: ... And when he had said this, he breathed on them, 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."

- **James 5:14-16**: Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.
The Reconciliation Process

- Examination of conscience and recognition of sin
  - Prior to confession, as well as each day in our life, we should compare our lives with the Ten Commandments. Only through sincere examination can we identify our faults and know what we must confess and where we must strive to live more as Christ would have us live.

- Prayer for confessor
  - Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide your confessor (priest)

- Prayer to the Holy Spirit for a good confession
  - You should always pray for strength and assistance in making a good confession.

- Confession
  - Enter and begin with the sign of the cross
  - “Bless me father for I have sinned. It has been [x] weeks/months/years since my last confession.”
  - State your mortal sins with details about the number of times you committed the sin since your last confession and any history of this sin being habitual.
  - State any of your venial sins.
  - Receive penance and advice
  - Say the Act of Contrition
  - Receive forgiveness/absolution

- Do your penance
A Valid Confession

- Must be confessed to a priest with valid orders
- All sins must be confessed
  - All or none forgiveness
- Penitent must be contrite
  - Contrition – “sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again” (CCC 1451)
- Perfect contrition – “arises from a love by which God is loved above all else” (CCC 1452)
  - “Remits venial sins” and “obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible”.
- Imperfect contrition – contrition “born of the consideration of sin’s ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner”. (CCC 1453)
  - “Cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins”
Examination of Conscience

• Simple Examination
  • Examine how you have sinned against God by acting counter to:
    • The three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love.
    • The four cardinal virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice.

• Moderate Examination
  • Examine how you have sinned against God:
    • By acting counter to the 10 commandments.
    • By committing sins that are a part of the 7 cardinal sins.

• Complex Examination
  • Use materials like the pamphlet by Intercessors of the Lamb
The Penitential Life

- Indulgence – an act that remits the temporal punishment due to sin either partially or fully (Plenary).
  - The Holy See has already issued the Plenary Indulgence for the Year of Faith effective Oct. 11, 2012.
- Penance every Friday
  - Catholics are still required to give up something every Friday of the year.
  - In the U.S. the Holy See has granted the right to have the laity choose their penance. (Giving up meat was the typical penance before this exception.)
- All sins have temporal punishment or Purgatorial punishment due.
  - If you do not complete the temporal punishment or penances that remit them before your death, Purgatory is the only option for those that will go to heaven.
  - You must die in a state of grace (i.e. without mortal sin on your soul) to enter Purgatory and/or Heaven.
Do Not Be Afraid

• It is easy to be afraid when you are going to open up your deepest darkest sins/secrets to a man you barely know, worse if you know him.
  • Can. 983 §1. The **sacramental seal is inviolable**; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason. §2. The interpreter, if there is one, and all others who in any way have knowledge of sins from confession are also obliged to observe secrecy.
  • Can. 1388 §1. A confessor who directly violates the sacramental seal incurs a latae sententiae excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; one who does so only indirectly is to be punished according to the gravity of the delict.

• Remember that there is likely no sin that the priest hasn’t heard before and that sin is embarrassing, but getting off of your mind and soul has a great healing effect.
Questions