

Review of last lesson – The Eucharist

- The Eucharist - It's the most important of all the Sacraments
- During the consecration the substance of the bread and wine change into the Body & Blood of Christ. This change is known as **Transubstantiation**.
- In the Eucharist we have what we call the **Real Presence** which is Jesus' Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine.
- The Eucharist is not a sign – it is the real body and blood of Christ.
- We must not receive any “communion” at protestant churches.
- We can prove our belief in the Eucharist easily from sacred tradition and scripture. → John Chapter 6
- When we receive the Eucharist we must be in a state of Grace. If we are not we must first confess our sins in the sacrament of Confession.

Chapter 26 – The Sacrament of Penance

- Recall that we are all called to a new life through sanctifying grace. Which we receive at Baptism.
- At Baptism our souls are purified. All sin and all punishment due to us because of sin is removed from our souls and we are made clean.
- After baptism we still have the capacity to use our Free Will and commit personal sin (Venial & Mortal)
- To remain in a state of grace Jesus gave us the sacrament of Confession to return our souls to state of Grace.

Understanding the Sacrament of Penance

- Where does the power of the sacrament come from and how does the priest have the power to forgive sins?
- Simple Answer: The Power of the Sacrament comes from Jesus who passed His authority onto His Apostles.

- The Apostle John, an eyewitness, recorded more directly the words of Jesus giving the power to forgive sins to all the Apostles after the testimony of the Resurrection:

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 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."" (Jn 20:19-23)

In this verse we see that Jesus was sending His apostles out into the world with full authority in His name. This authority would come from the power of the Holy Spirit. We see this when Jesus breathed on them. This power and authority allowed the apostles to forgive sin and to retain sins. → Important! Authority only comes from God.

The Signs and Effects of Confession

- As with the other sacraments Confession has “signs”.
- The Signs of confessions are:
 - 1) Confession of Sins: We tell our sins to the Priest
 - 2) Word of Absolution: The priest says the words of absolution while making the sign of the cross and saying the words of absolution. → Our sins are forgiven.
- The signs show us the power of the sacrament. They tell us what is happening during confession.

- If we have properly prepared ourselves for confession God does wonderful things for us.
 - 1) He takes away the sins we confess and restores us to a state of Grace.
 - 2) When our sins are forgiven some of the temporal punishment that is due to our sins is satisfied.
 - Example of Temporal Punishment: If we break our neighbor's window and fess up to it our neighbor will forgive us. While we have been forgiven we still have to pay for the broken window. In confession or even all of this payment is satisfied.
 - When we die we will have to pay for the consequences of our sin even though they have been forgiven and will not be held against us. They will not keep us out of Heaven. We pay for this punishment here on earth by accepting our sufferings or in purgatory.
 - 3) The sacrament offers us the Graces we need to do good and avoid sin in the future.
 - For example if you confess that you lied – God will give you more grace to avoid lying in the future.

How to make a good Confession

- 1) Examine your conscience: This helps you recognize your sins clearly
- 2) Have sorrow for having sinned. You should pray to God to help you have contrition for your sins.
- 3) Make a firm resolution and have a sincere heart and honestly try to avoid the sins you confess in the future.
- 4) Confess your sins to the priest honestly not trying to hide anything for fear of shame. The priest will not judge you. He is there to provide forgiveness. If anything He will be glad and joyful that you have confessed honestly and openly. When you make a confession your confession is “sealed” meaning that the Priest cannot tell anyone what you confessed. We call this the “Seal of Confession”.
- 5) Receive absolution for your sins and do the penance the Priest gives you. Typically penance is a few simple prayers. Do your penance ASAP!

The Rite of Confession

- Like the other sacraments there is a Rite or Ceremony associated with the celebration of Penance.
- The Rite:
 1. Upon entering the confessional the Priest will greet you.
 2. You will make the **Sign of the Cross**
 3. You will tell the Priest how long it has been since your last confession: **“Forgive me Father for I have sinned. It has been _____ since my last confession”**.
 4. Next you tell the priest your sins and how many times you have committed any mortal sins. For example you might say **“I have missed Mass three times”** or **“I have taken the Lords name in vain 5 times”**. If you can't recall the number of times you've sinned then simply tell that to the priest or give the priest an honest estimate.
 5. After your confession the Priest may give you advice. He will also give you your Penance.
 6. He will then ask you to say an Act of Contrition. A common one is:
“O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen”.
 7. Finally he will give you absolution, say a short prayer and send you on your way.

VIDEO: How to make a good confession - (2.5 minutes)

Examination of Conscience in Preparation for Confession