

10 STEPS TO TAKE IN THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

- 1 Quiet your mind and heart and ask the Holy Spirit to be with you. Ask God to help you to see yourself as he sees you - with all your strengths and all your faults. Ask him to help you to be completely honest with yourself and the priest.
- 2 Spend some time examining your conscience. Think about your actions and attitudes in each area of your life. Ask your self, "Is this area of my life pleasing to God or not?" (You could jot down your sins as you recall them.)
- 3 Make the sign of the cross with the priest. He will say:
"May God who has enlightened every heart help you to know your sins and to trust in his mercy." You reply: "Amen"
- 4 Come to the priest for confession. He will welcome you in the name of Jesus and the Church. Tell him when you made your last confession. Say: 'Bless me Father, for I have sinned.'
- 5 Confess your sins to the priest. Simply and directly, tell him your sins and the areas where you have offended God.
- 6 The priest will talk to you about your life, encourage you to be more faithful to God in future, and help you decide what to do make up for your sins- (your penance.) You must decide there and then to do it!
- 7 The priest will ask you to make an act of contrition. You can pray in your own words, telling God that you are sorry for your sins and that you want to love him better, or you can say this prayer:
**O my God,
 I am sorry for my sins because I have offended you.
 I know I should love you above all things.
 Help me to do penance, to do better,
 and to avoid anything that might lead me to sin. Amen.**
- 8 The priest will pray the Church's official prayer of absolution:
**"God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son,
 has reconciled the world to himself
 and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins:
 Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace.
 I absolve you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."**
 Respond: "Amen"
- 9 The priest will wish you peace. Be sure to thank him as you leave.
- 10 Return to your place and spend some time quietly thanking God for his loving forgiveness.
Don't forget to do your penance !



SOME POINTS TO HELP YOU EXAMINE YOUR CONCIENCE:

[Write your own remarks on a separate paper, which you can destroy after Confession]

FAITH

- Do I pray every day?
- Do I go for Sunday Mass and take part in a prayerful way?
- Do I respect God's name (and also sacred persons, places, things)?
- Do I take part in any superstitious practices?
- Do I take part in the worship of other Gods?

SELF

- Am I selfish?
- Do I indulge in any habits which are harmful?

FAMILY/ OTHERS

- Do I respect my parents? Show my love for them?
- Do I relate well to my brothers and sisters?
- Do I help out at home?
- Am I truthful?
- Do I forgive those who hurt me? Do I ask forgiveness?
- Do I show respect to people who serve me?
- Do I care for the poor/lonely/old? ... or do I neglect them?

SCHOOL AND WORK

- Do I show respect to teachers and other students?
- Do I study seriously?
- Am I honest when doing tests/assignments?
- How do I behave if I am corrected?
- Am I punctual, responsible?
- Am I friendly, kind?

FUN

- Do I spend too much money on clothes/food etc?
- Do I respect others' property?
- What kind of movies/ TV programs/ books do I look at?
- How do I talk, behave with others?
- Do I act as I believe I should OR just do what my friends are doing?

SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Do I respect my body and the bodies of others?
- Do I control my sexual feelings/ give in to them? (Masturbation, pornography)
- Do I dress in a modest way?

