

**PROPER PREPARATION for the SACRAMENT of  
RECONCILIATION, CONFESSION, PENANCE, et al.**

**with a**

**detailed**

**EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE  
(Revised Edition 2/2006)**

provided by the

***Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)***

***A Religious Association, Inc.***

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## **PRAYER BEFORE EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE and CONFESSION**

*Jesus, my Lord and my God, I kneel before You, dying on the Cross. Fill me with a deep sorrow for all my sins. You alone know their number and gravity. Send me the Holy Spirit, His wisdom and love, that I may not fool or excuse myself but admit my guilt.*

*When I look at others around me, I am often tempted to feel good about myself, thinking that I am better than they.*

*But then I look at You, hanging from the Cross, I know that I nailed you there by my sins. I also spat on Your face, crowned You with thorns and scourged You. Your kind, piercing eyes leave me no room to hide. Yes, I am guilty. I have broken Your law. Forgive me.*

*Mary, Mother of Jesus and my Mother, how much pain I caused you and your Jesus by sinning! Ask Him to have mercy on me and take away all my sins of thought, desire, looks, actions and omissions. Assure Him that He has not died in vain for me. With His help and your prayers, I will not sin again.*

**Amen.**

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## **HOW to GO to CONFESSION**

Of most importance, let Confession be **an encounter** with God.

1. You always have the option to go to confession anonymously, that is, behind the screen or face to face, if you so desire.
  2. After the priest greets you in the name of Christ, make the sign of the Cross. He may choose to include a reading from Scripture for reflection. Then say: "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession. These are my sins."
  3. Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. (You might even want to discuss the circumstances and the root causes of your sins and ask the priest for advice or direction.)
  4. Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then make an Act of Contrition for your sins.
  5. The priest will dismiss you with the words of praise: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good" or "the Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying either: "His mercy endures forever" or "Thanks be to God."
  6. Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible.
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## **EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE based on the SEVEN CAPITAL SINS**

1. **PRIDE** - Am I self-centered?
  2. **GREED** - Are money and material things the real goals in my life?
  3. **LUST** - Am I pure in act, speech and thought?
  4. **ANGER** - Do I control my temper and tongue?
  5. **GLUTTONY** - Do I control my appetites and addictions?
  6. **ENVY** - Am I jealous of what others have or are?
  7. **SLOTH** - Am I lazy? Am I apathetic? Do I waste time?
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## **THREE CONDITIONS NECESSARY for MORTAL SIN**

Mortal sin is a horrible offence against God, so horrible that it destroys the life of grace in the soul.

Three simultaneous conditions must be fulfilled for a mortal sin:

- (1) the act must be something very serious;**
- (2) the person must have sufficient understanding of what is being done;**
- (3) the person must have sufficient freedom of the will.**

So I cannot commit a mortal sin if the matter is not serious (e.g., if I stole a small amount of money from my employer), or if I did not know what I was doing (e.g., if I were to hurt someone accidentally or unthinkingly), or if I did not act with full freedom (e.g., I was under great physical or emotional pressure).

### **GOLDEN RULE:**

**Sin is like a ticking time-bomb which could explode and suddenly send us to Hell.**

**NEVER RISK LIVING IN MORTAL SIN EVEN FOR ONE HOUR.**

When you realize you are in mortal sin, make an IMMEDIATE act of perfect sorrow, promising to go to confession as soon as possible. Guilt is removed, but other sacraments may be received only AFTER confession.

### **WORSE SIN?**

**If it is not the worst one, it certainly is the one most severely condemned by Jesus Christ:**

**UNFORGIVENESS.**

**“If you forgive the faults of others, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours. If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you.” (Mt. 6, 14) “My command to you is: Love your enemies; pray for your persecutors. (Mt. 5, 44)”**

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## **THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US REPENT**

Having revealed to us the ways in which we have turned away from God, the Holy Spirit now invites us to turn back. This turning back is called “repentance.” In the confessional, aware of our sinfulness, we turn back to God through His representative, the priest, as we really are. NOTHING is hidden, no excuses, fully exposed to the view of God.

In our sinfulness, we ask for forgiveness. In our sickness, we ask for healing. In our weakness, we ask for strength. In our misery, we ask for mercy. We stand before God empty, humble, and repentant, determined to amend our lives and resolved to make reparation and do penance.

But we don’t do this in a spirit of sadness. We do it with JOY! Confession is NOT a tribunal of judgement where we have others accusing us and a judge to condemn us. It is a “Tribunal of Mercy” where we accuse ourselves under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, who stands by outside as our defense lawyer so that we may receive, not judgement, but MERCY.

This is the heart of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Realizing how much we have allowed ourselves to become filled with thoughts, concerns, anxieties, and values that are not of God, we consciously try to empty ourselves of all these things so that God can fill us with His Mercy. The more we empty ourselves, confess our sins, the more we can be filled.

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## **EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE (BASED on the 10 COMMANDMENTS)**

How long ago did I make my last confession?

Did I receive absolution?

Have I performed my penance?

Did I willfully conceal a mortal sin, or confess without true sorrow, without firm purpose of amendment, or without intending to perform my penance?

If so, did I receive Holy Communion? How many times?

Have I also, during this time, received Confirmation, the Sacrament of Matrimony or Extreme Unction?

Did I have a firm desire to sin no more.

### **1. I AM the LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BESIDES ME.**

Do I seek to love God with all my heart?

Do I spend time with God in prayer every day?

Did I despair of God's mercy or deny His grace?

Was I angry with God or promote indifference or ingratitude to God?

Did I willfully allow myself to be distracted at Holy Mass or when in prayer

Did I put off confession needlessly?

Do I feel I must control my life (all aspects of it) instead of recognizing that God is fully in charge and responsible for everything in my life?

Do I try to live without God in my life. Do I make myself more important, setting God aside?

Did I give into depression, self-pity, or self depreciating thoughts?

Did I put material things people or places before God? Give them more importance than God?

When I pray, do I think about every word (prayer from the heart) or am I just reciting words? Do I give in to and foster distractions?

Do I pray with my family?

Do I try my best to eliminate sin from my life, deciding for God in all I think, do and say?

Are my possessions idols for me, replacing prayer?

Do I put my career and success ahead of my prayer life, or make them more important than my relationship with Christ?

Do I put money and the pleasures and comforts of life before God?

Have I been involved with occult practices such as the New Age rage, fortune telling, horoscopes, dungeons and dragons, numerology, tarot cards, witchcraft, palm reading, medium, spiritism, devil worship, Ouija board, amulets, enneagram, reincarnation, astrology, good luck charms or believed in them?

Did I play or foster the playing of Dungeons and Dragons?

Have I sold, kept or given books such as these?

Did I deny or doubt God's existence or refuse to believe His revelation?

Did I deny that I was Catholic or leave the Catholic faith?

Did I join the Masons or other secret societies?

Have I openly rejected or spoken against any doctrine of the Catholic Church?

Have I actively participated in non-Catholic services beyond canonical guidelines?

Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?

Have I unnecessarily exposed my faith or that of others to danger?

Have I disbelieved or willfully doubted any article of faith, or suggested or encouraged such doubts in others?

Did I fail to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, including the Easter or Christmas Season?

Did I receive the Sacrament of Matrimony or Confirmation while in the state of a mortal sin?

Was I married by a Justice of the Peace or by another minister without first getting a dispensation?

Have I joined any secret society forbidden by the Catholic Church? Do you still belong to it?

Did I despair or presume on God's mercy?

Am I a prisoner of fear, anxiety, worry, guilt, inferiority, hatred of myself?

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Do I trust God's loving care for me? Do I accept that the Father loves me?

Do I give God credit for my successes, or have I pridefully credited them to my own doing?

Do I make time to read Scripture that I may know and hear Jesus and His Father?

Do I seek to surrender myself to God's or do I allow the past to trouble me? Do I hand it over to God?

Do I really try to seek God's will, not mine, in prayer?

Am I unwilling or afraid to say "yes" to God even if the situation is painful or not what I want?

### **2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE the NAME of the LORD YOU GOD IN VAIN**

Did I use God's name lightly or carelessly in my speech. Did I swear or take God's name in vain?

Have I been angry with or feared God? (If so, tell Our Lord and hand such feelings over to Him.)

Have I cursed someone in God's name or condemned someone thoughtlessly or used foul language?

Have I wished evil upon any other person?

Have I insulted a sacred person (priest or nun) or abused a sacred object?

Did I break an oath or vow?

Did I take an oath to be revenged or to commit some other crime?

Did I make an oath in a secret society?

Did I slander or insult a sacred person or object?

Did I use the Lord's name lightly, in surprise or anger (habitual, not thinking)?

Did I speak badly of the Church?

Did I use Holy Scripture inappropriately or irreverently?

Did I use the name of the Pope, Mary, or a Saint or any other sacred person irreverently?

### **3. Do I REMEMBER to KEEP HOLY the SABBATH DAY.**

Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sunday or Holy Days of Obligation?

Have I come late to Mass or left early without a good reason?

Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday?

Did I allow sports or personal schedules to dictate a schedule for Sunday, or did I follow that Sunday is the Lord's Day?

Was I irreverent in church? Did I talk aloud or about things that were not praise or worship to Jesus present in the Tabernacle? Was I giggling or laughing?

Have I made my Easter duty, i.e., received Confession and Communion during the Easter season (from first Sunday of Lent through Trinity Sunday)?

Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?

Have I tried to observe Sundays as a family day and a day of rest?

Do I do needless work on Sundays? Have I caused others to do so?

Do I hold unforgiveness, pride, lust or envy in my heart when I come to Church and receive Communion?

Do I go to confession regularly/yearly?

Have I talked, laughed and gazed about during Mass?

Am I attentive at Mass, actively participating or do I go out of habit and not out of love?

Was I late for Mass or did I leave Mass early without serious reason?

Was I irreverent in Church by immodest conversation, by an unbecoming way of dressing, or by other gross misconduct?

Have I revealed the hidden serious sin of another without sufficient reason?

Do I try to put the Word of God into practice every day?

Have I lied in confession or withheld a mortal sin?

Do I fast from food and drink for one hour before receiving Communion?

Do I fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

Do I abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent?

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### **4. HONOR YOUR FATHER and YOUR MOTHER**

Do I honor and obey my parents?  
Have I failed to show love and respect for any member of my family?  
Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives or was I ashamed of them?  
Do I hold unforgiveness in my heart towards any of my family members?  
Did I speak badly of my parents?  
Did I speak badly about my children?  
Did I meddle in the affairs of married children?  
Was I too lax or strict with boundaries, discipline and rules?  
Have I failed to accept anyone just as he or she is?  
Have I been patient with another's differences from me?  
Have I been impatient or uncharitable in words or actions because others irritated me?  
Have I been stubborn in my own views and critical of other people's views?  
Have I failed to give religious example that is good to one's family or friends?  
Did I neglect the duties to my spouse?  
Was I nagging to my spouse or children?  
Have I been tolerant with another's shortcomings?  
Have I shown respect towards my children?  
Do I discipline my children with love or with anger?  
Has my family been deprived of necessities because of my wastefulness or materialism?  
Have I been neglectful of my responsibilities as an active parent in my child's life?  
Do I keep watch on the company they keep and where they spend their time?  
Do I compare my children or favor one over another?  
Have I given my family good religious example?  
Do I try to bring peace into my home life?  
Do I pray for my family?  
Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children? Am I sensitive to their needs?  
Have I provided religious education for my children?

Have I neglected to have them baptized and prepared and brought at the proper age to Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation?  
Do I encourage my children to make frequent use of the sacraments?  
Have I failed to take them to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?  
Have I caused them to not observe abstinence on the days prescribed by the Church?  
Do I allow my children to watch immoral television or movies or listen to music which condone or encourage sex and violence?  
Do I respect those in authority (i.e. teachers, police, clergy) and teach my children to do so?

### **5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL**

Am I guilty of murder (in thought or deed)?  
Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone to have an abortion?  
Do I support abortion in my heart or knowingly support anyone who encourages or supports abortion? Have I completely investigated the positions and records of political aspirants prior to voting? Have I voted for life?  
Did I participate in or condone mercy killing?  
Have I had an IUD installed?  
Have I practiced birth control (pill)  
Has my spouse been sterilized with my consent?  
Have I been sterilized or used birth control other than natural family planning?  
Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization or birth control?  
Have I physically or emotionally abused anyone or done damage to someone's reputation?  
Have I abused my body with any liquor or drugs, or practices causing physical harm?  
If drugs or liquor were involved, did it deprive my family and the community of God of good example? Did I take medications unnecessarily?  
Have I seriously endangered my own life and the lives of others by disregarding traffic regulations, by driving under the influence of liquor, or by allowing my children to drive a

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car even though they are not qualified or insured properly?

Do I show respect for my body by seeking medical care when needed?

Do I get proper rest, diet and exercise?

Do I eat or drink in excess or too little to maintain good health? Did I maintain a healthy diet? (intemperance – overeating or drinking)

Have I neglected to follow doctor's orders?

Have I neglected the health and medical needs of my family?

Did I use obscene or vulgar gestures?

Was I prejudiced or did I harbor a grudge, seek revenge or retaliation?

Have I abused drugs or alcohol or encouraged anyone else to do so?

Have I given scandal to anyone, leading them into sin?

Did I drive carelessly endangering my own health and life or the life of another?

Did I participate in self mutilation (excessive tattoos, body piercing, piercing of nipples or sexual organs)?

Did I procrastinate, or assume a lazy attitude. Did I fail to respect the dignity of self or others?

Did I give scandal to another or treat another unjustly?

Have I cooperated in the serious sin of another - by helping someone obtain or handle pornographic material?

Did I watch TV or movies or watch computer programs that promoted sex or violence?

Did I have a violent temper or throw a tantrum yelling or threatening?

Did I ponder or attempt suicide?

Have I abused animals by cruelty or neglect?

### **6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

Have I been faithful to my marriage vows?

Have I seriously failed by omitting the proper marks of affection for my marriage partner?

Was I selfish in marital intimacy?

Did I fail to be open to life without a serious reason?

Have I performed the marriage act in an improper way or refused the reasonable sexual desires of my partner?

Have I been involved in any sexual activity outside of marriage (including petting and impure touches?)

Am I guilty of masturbation or touching myself impurely?

Have I committed an impure act against nature?

Did I use a contraceptive?

Did I intentionally cause a sexual climax outside of intercourse?

Did I intentionally withdraw from a vaginal ejaculation?

Did I perform anal sex or other degrading sex practices?

Did I practice prostitution?

Did I have in-vitro fertilization or artificial insemination?

Did I partake in surrogate motherhood?

Did I partake in or have "Selective reduction" of babies in the womb?

Did I participate in types of fertility testing that involve immoral acts (masturbation)?

Did I partake of Bestiality (sexual acts with animals)?

Did I have oral sex with ejaculation (permitted as co agreed foreplay with no ejaculation in marriage)

Did I rape another?

Did I participate in homosexual or lesbian acts?

Did I have lust in my heart (if I could I would!)?

Have I had sex with another outside of marriage?

Did I participate in "swinging" or wife swapping?

Do I live with another of the opposite sex outside of marriage?

Do I indulge in impure forms of entertainment - movies, television, visual?

Have I sung immodest songs or listened to them?

Have I participated in or condoned pornography?

Have I kept, lent or sold pornographic material?

Do I watch TV shows or movies which promote immoral sex or violence?

Have I engaged in homosexual activities?

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Do I willfully entertain impure thoughts and desires?

Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects?

Am I pure in speech? Have I told impure jokes or listened to them?

Do I dress immodestly?

Did I marry, advise another to marry or condone a marriage outside the Church?

### **7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL**

Have I stolen what was not mine?

Have I received stolen goods?

Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?

Have I stolen anything consecrated to God or from a holy place? (This is a sacrilege as well as theft.)

Have I damaged property? Did I make restitution?

Do I pay my debts promptly?

Do I share what I have with the poor?

Did I not keep a promise?

Do I support the Church according to my means?

Do I gamble excessively?

Do I waste time at work, school or home? Am I lazy?

Did I cheat on my taxes or cheat anyone else?

Did I give or accept bribes?

Have I charged exorbitant prices, or made out false bills, or falsified the quality of my goods?

Have I passed counterfeit money?

Have I kept things I found without inquiring for the owner?

Have I retained any of the money entrusted to me?

Have I contracted debts without any reasonable hope of paying?

Have I received pay for work/service I have never done?

Have I failed to return things I borrowed?

Do I thank God for all He has given me?

Have I been wasteful?

Have I committed fraud or embezzlement in any public office or private trust? Have I voted regularly?

Have I taken advantage of the poor, the simple, the young and inexperienced?

Have I ever forged, participated in price fixing, or tax evasion?

Have I ever blackmailed another?

Have I ever violated copyrights? Have I pirated computer software?

Have I caused injury or loss by my negligence or ignorance in the discharge of my profession or employment?

Have I, in any way, taken part in another's theft, fraud or injustice or concealed information when it was my duty to report it?

### **8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR**

Have I told lies?

Have I gossiped or spoken behind another's back?

Am I sincere in my relationships with others?

Have I read another's letters without authority?

Have I betrayed a confidence?

Have I signed false papers or documents or forged any writings?

Have I been angry or resentful towards another? Am I nursing a grudge?

Do I enjoy getting back or getting even with another? Is it "payback" time?"

Do I hold hatred in my heart or wished harm to another human being?

Do I refuse to forgive?

Am I negative, critical or uncharitable towards others in thought or speech?

Am I impatient, unkind, envious, jealous or hateful towards another?

Do I despise or discriminate against any group or individual because of race, religion, nationality, politics, age, profession, gender, or any other reason?

Do I consider a group or individual inferior to me? When someone has needed me, have I refused to help without good reason?

Did I brag or boast, or participate in self flattery?

Did I make rash judgments, or was I negative, critical or uncharitable in thought regarding others?

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### **9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE**

Have I kept company with someone else's spouse?  
Have I entertained impure thoughts about another's spouse?  
Did I entertain impure thoughts or fantasies?  
Did I dwell on impure thoughts or fantasies for the purpose of sexual arousal?  
Did I let my imagination flourish in relationship to relationships?  
Did I read sexually explicit materials?  
Have I caused impure thoughts and temptations by impure reading, movies, conversation, or curiosity?  
Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts or temptations?

Have I removed any pornographic material from my possession so that it does not cause further problems?

### **10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS**

Am I envious or jealous of what others have materially, physically, or spiritually?  
Do I envy other people's families or possessions?  
Are material possessions the goals of my life? Am I too attached to them?  
Am I greedy or selfish?  
Do I trust God to provide for all of my material and spiritual needs?

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## **ON DEVOTIONAL CONFESSION**

(Editor's Note: Following is the text of an intervention at the world **Synod of Bishops** on the role of Confession of venial sins (devotional Confession) by **Bishop Austin Vaughan, Auxiliary of New York** and an elected delegate to the Synod from the **United States**.)

I would like to speak in my own name on the role of confession of venial sins (devotional Confession) in the spiritual life of our people. (We are talking about a Confession where none of the matter is obligatory--either venial sins never before confessed and forgiven.)

Such Confessions were strongly encouraged in the first 70 years of this century. Now they are sometimes discouraged, more often not encouraged, because they are regarded (by some) as unnecessary, or focusing on trifles, or encouraging scrupulosity, or encouraging immaturity, or wasting a priest's time, or merely routine and hence impersonal.

In recent years, some encouragement has been given to devotional Confession if it becomes a genuine spiritual experience, or if it provides some spiritual guidance or direction. I believe in the value of spiritual guidance in the Sacrament of Penance, because many people receive little or none of it elsewhere. I believe in the value of a priest's being friendly and helpful in penance, because for many people it is their only personal contact with a priest. I believe that priests and penitents have an obligation to do what they can to make the sacrament in which they are worshipping God together more fruitful.

But, I would also like to defend the value of "routine" devotional Confessions, which often do not involve any identifiable profound spiritual experience; often these Confessions are brushed aside as useless or worse.

There are many times when the Sacrament of Penance will not be an emotionally uplifting experience--either because the penitent finds it hard to confess at all, or hard to confess even some particular venial sins; or because the penitent is tired or out of sorts or distracted; or because the priest leaves much to be desired in his response, through his own fault or through nobody's fault; or because the penitent wants to get in and out in a hurry; or because there are long lines waiting, so the process cannot be slow and easy. There are times when both priest and penitent may be glad to get it over with.

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Even then, every use of the Sacrament of Penance is an implicit acknowledgement and reaffirmation of basic attitudes in Catholic life. Let me just list 10, although there are many more:

- 1) Every time I go to Confession, I implicitly acknowledge that I am a sinner--not just a part of a massa damnata, but with sins of my own that were my own fault.
- 2) Every time I go to Confession, I affirm implicitly that God's mercy is always available to me; that I can never get so far away that He does not care about me; that no sine is unforgivable; that God is a Father who sent His Son to save me by His suffering and death. (This has a special significance in an age when many people wonder if God or anyone else really cares about them.)
- 3) Every time, I implicitly affirm that God's mercy comes through Christ. The most poorly instructed penitent knows that it is the power of Jesus, not just the priest, who is forgiving his sins.
- 4) Every time, I implicitly affirm that God's mercy reaches me through the Church--that she is a mother who loves me in this sacrament, even when I cannot love myself and that God Himself wants me to come to Him by sharing in the Church's life.
- 5) Every time I go to Confession, I reaffirm that a priest is God's minister in a unique way.
- 6) Every time I go, I implicitly reaffirm that I can do things with God's grace that I will never succeed in doing on my own. Otherwise, sometimes a purpose of amendment would be meaningless.
- 7) Every time, I implicitly affirm that God wants me to face my sins squarely--say I am sorry for them specifically--and mean it. This means rejecting a part of my past life, so that the days ahead can be better than those behind.
- 8) Every time, I implicitly reaffirm that God expects me to do better, with and through His grace.
- 9) Every time, I implicitly reaffirm that He wants me to make up for my sins and those of others.
- 10) Every time a penitent goes to Confession, he is implicitly drawn to reception of the Eucharist.

In a sense, devotional Confession is our need for redemption come alive.

We live in a time when things done out of habit are regarded as having less value than those done from careful conscious choice; and sometimes, when we do things routinely, we can forget why we started doing them in the first place. But many of our habitual actions contain judgements that are deeply a part of us, and that indicate how deeply faith in Jesus has permeated our lives. Frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Penance preserves my sensitivity to my own sins, and to my need

for God's help. It also assures someone who is struggling with temptations that God's love and mercy and grace are near.

Finally, we believe that reception of the sacrament brings a growth in grace, an increase of divine life in our souls. Saint Thomas Aquinas' explanation of this in theological terms was that the infusion of God's grace elicits a new and more profound act of charity on the part of the penitent (not necessarily an act of deeper emotional intensity, but a deepening of our commitment to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity who dwell within us).

I realize that some ways of explaining grace in more recent years have obscured this truth--but it is still valid, even in a new intellectual context--and it is a part of the grasp of the faith possessed by many people.

They were taught that it is good to receive the sacrament to gain grace, and they are rightly upset if this motivation is made to be of no account.

(This could take up a whole talk in itself.)

To sum up, devotional Confession has value:

- 1) As a means of spiritual growth for ordinary people.
- 2) As an intensification of the penitent's own penitential sense and ecclesial sense and attachment to Christ.

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- 3) As a part of ongoing conversion--especially for people who are struggling against temptations, without complete success.
- 4) As a means of growing in grace, in God's life in us and with us and through us.

Our people have a right to the benefits of the sacrament, and we have an obligation to do what we can to help make those benefits available to them.

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- 2.) As an intensification of the penitent's own penitential sense and ecclesial sense and attachment to Christ.
- 3.) As a part of ongoing conversion -- especially for people who are struggling against temptations, without complete success.
- 4). As a means of growing in grace, in God's life in us and with us and through us.

**(by Bishop Austin Vaughan of New York)**

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### **LIFE'S BEAUTY**

The beauty of life is to be found not in luxury, but in simplicity; In sweat of the brow, sweat of the hands, sweat of the heart; in pride of work, without greed of gold. To be loyal in friendship, patient in suffering, and rich in laughter is to be a good comrade in the workshop of life, and to such faithful servants God will pay wages of **PEACE** and **JOY**.

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### **THE THREAD**

*"Then shall I know: not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why the dark threads are as needful in the weaver's skilful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned"*

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### **TRUST**

Trust is the key to receiving God's mercy. The more we trust that God really loves us, really cares about us in a personal way, no matter how bad our sins have been, the more we can let go of all the things that prevent us from being filled with His love.

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### **ACT of CONTRITION**

*Oh, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishment, but most of all, because they offend Thee my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly intend with the help of Thy Spirit to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.*

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# ***Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)***

## **PRAYER AFTER CONFESSION**

*Thank You, dearest Jesus, for the gift of absolution which has wiped away all my sins. It's so easily given but is never cheap. It costs You every drop of Your Blood, every pain of Your Passion. You pay the full price every time with everyone. You have accepted my sins as if they were precious gifts, and have replaced them with Your grace. I will continue to do penance for them every day of my life. Mary, thank Jesus for making me sinless once more.*

**Amen**

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## **HELPS TO CHRISTIAN HOLINESS**

Do I take the **Sacrament of Penance** seriously and use it frequently?

Do I try to examine my conscience regularly (even daily)?

Do I consciously seek to imitate Christ in all of my dealings with others?

Do I lead others to Christ rather than away from Him by my example and actions?

Do I ask Our Lady to help me to examine my conscience and to make a sincere and honest confession?

Do I seek to lead others to make frequent use of the sacraments?

A helpful check on spiritual growth is how Christ-like you are in having no enemies, forgiving others, loving and serving others and carrying your cross.

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## **NINE SPIRITUAL REMEDIES**

A little more patience - to tolerate those with whom I must live and who are not at all congenial to me.

A little firmness - to continue this work which duty demands but which is repellent to me.

A little more humility - to remain at the post to which God has led me, but which does not correspond with my dreams and plans.

A little more common sense - to take people as they are, not as I should like them to be.

A little more prudence - not to bother so much about other people's own business.

A little more strength - to endure that which so suddenly disturbs the soul.

A little more cheerfulness - so as not to show I have been hurt.

A little more unselfishness - in trying to understand the Thoughts and feelings of others.

**Above all a little more PRAYER, to draw God to my heart and take counsel with Him.**

**"When you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me with you, says the Lord, and I will change your lot." (Jer. 29:13-14)**

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