

Marians of the Immaculate Conception and EWTN presents

The Divine Mercy Cenacle



LESSON SEVEN

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament of Mercy. The Lord rejects no sinner. God wants to clear all obstacles to our relationship with Him; He wants us to know Him and love Him. Sin is the obstacle that keeps us from drawing closer. Reconciliation is a vehicle by which we can experience His mercy and forgiveness and love.

Jesus is the One who forgives us our sins in the confessional through His representative, the priest. He told St. Faustina, "When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I myself act in your soul.

"Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy. Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity. The proud remain always in poverty and misery, because My grace turns away from them to humble souls" (1602*). Jesus also told St. Faustina, "Do not lose heart in coming for pardon, for I am always ready to forgive you. As often as you beg for it, you glorify My mercy" (1488).

1. Why the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers proper guidance in our understanding in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and its importance in our life: "According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year." Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. Children must go to the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time (1457)."

We should go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation with contrite heart and deep trust. The Lord said to St. Faustina, "You are dealing with the God of mercy, which your misery cannot exhaust. Remember, I did not allot only a certain number of pardons" (1488). "The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy"(723).

2. What keeps us away from confession?

Fear and pride keep us from entering the confessional and opening our hearts before the Lord's representative. Another problem is the lack of proper understanding of the Sacrament. Many in today's world question why we have to confess our sins to a priest who is only a man. Shouldn't we go directly to God?

We rationalize and create our own rules. We do not really understand the words of Jesus to empowered His Disciples when He appeared to them after the Resurrection and said: "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 20:22).

Another stumbling block can be the priest himself. We may judge him to be unworthy or because we know him may feel embarrassed to confess our sins.

The Lord makes it clear that, "The person of the priest is, for Me, only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a priest it is that I am making use of; open your soul in Confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light" (1725).

3. Why is humility needed when going to confession?

Pride hardens and blinds the heart. Humility is the opposite; it points to the humble acceptance of our limitations and allows us to see and acknowledge our faults and sins.

Saint Faustina wrote, "A soul does not benefit as it should from the sacrament of confession if it is not humble. Pride keeps it in darkness. The soul neither knows how, nor is it willing, to probe with precision the depths of its own misery. It puts on a mask and avoids everything that might bring it recovery" (113).

4. What should be our attitude when going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Even though the spirit is strong, the flesh is weak. We get discouraged as we often go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and confess the same sins over and over. We must persevere and be open and sincere. Saint Faustina wrote, "Even the holiest and wisest confessor cannot forcibly pour into the soul what he desires if it is not sincere and open. An insincere, secretive soul risks great dangers in the spiritual life, and even the Lord Jesus Himself does not give Himself to such a soul on a higher level, because He knows it would derive no benefit from these special graces" (113).

* References without a source listed with the number are taken from the *Dairy of Saint Maria Faustina*.



Marians of the Immaculate Conception

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