

St. Mary's of the Lake, Watkins Glen, NY St. Benedict's, Odessa, NY



Why Should I Go to Confession?

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February 22, 2024

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Webinar Tips

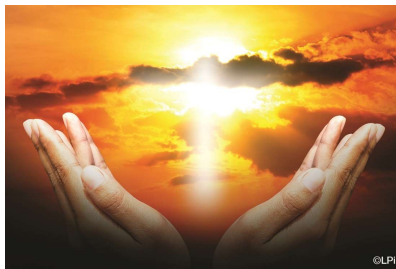
- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for "fit to window" under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters "Q & A". Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does, you can drag it around.

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Opening Prayer



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Why Should I Go to Confession?

We Could Ask Two Questions

How often should I go?

People used to go weekly,
monthly, ...

Now many seldom,
if ever go...

The pendulum
swung too far.

Why go at all?

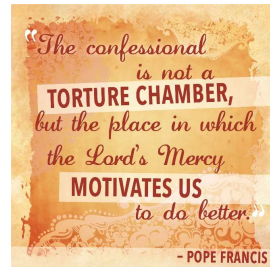
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Why Should I Go to Confession?

People's Experience of Confession

- Stories of people getting yelled at in the Confessional
- My first time going when I came back
- When they leave the confessional, feeling good enough that they want to come back.



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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Other Related Presentations

Theology and History

- *Sacraments: Channels of God's Grace, Part IV*
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/sacramentshealing>

How To

- *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/the-sacrament-of-reconciliation>

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Other Related Presentations cont'd

Forgiveness and Mercy

- *Why Is It So Hard to Forgive Myself (and others)*
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/video---why-is-it-so-hard-to-forgive.html>
- Year of Mercy Presentations and more
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/be-merciful.html>

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Today we are here to talk not about theology or how.

Today we focus on ***why!***

We are sinners
in need of redemption

- *Finding Peace and Healing in a Troubled World* series
<http://www.renewaloffaith.org/healing>

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Reasons People Don't Go to Confession

The book, *Confession, the Sacrament of Mercy* by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization speaks of the following as reasons people do not go to confession (5-6):

- “widespread disaffection”
- “denial of its usefulness”
- “forgiveness is a purely private affair”
- “uncomfortable confessing their sins to a priest”
- “disappointment at the unavailability of priests”
This last one indicates people want to go.

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Our **Need** to Confess

- Our need to confess flows from **our need to be forgiven**. We are sinners in need of forgiveness.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1847* – “To receive his mercy, we must admit our faults. *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 8-9).

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What the Sacraments Offer

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1131*– “The Sacraments are **efficacious signs of grace**, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which **divine life is dispensed to us.**”
- Baltimore Catechism - “A sacrament is an **outward sign instituted** by Christ to give **grace.**”

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Sacraments of Initiation

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist

Sacraments of Healing

4. Anointing of the Sick
5. **Reconciliation**
Reconciliation heals our **brokenness** with God and the Church from our sins.

Sacraments of Service

6. Matrimony
7. Holy Orders

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Reconciliation - Old Testament

- The first “original” sin in Genesis chapter 3
 - <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/original-sin.html>
- Cain and Abel – Genesis chapter 4
- Sacrifices for sins prescribed in Leviticus

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Reconciliation - Old Testament cont'd

- What was required in the Old Testament to receive God's forgiveness according to Scott Hahn in *Lord Have Mercy* (21-22)
 - Had to go to Temple in Jerusalem (journey there could take several days)
 - Offer a goat, sheep, or bull
 - At the Temple tell the reason for your sacrifice (i.e. confess your sins)
 - Kill the animal

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Reconciliation - Old Testament cont'd

Responsorial Psalm 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B
(Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11)

*Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,
whose sin is **covered**.*

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
my guilt I covered not.
I said, "I confess my faults to the LORD,"
and **you took away** the guilt of my sin.*

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Reconciliation - Old Testament cont'd

- Numbers 21:4-9 *"From Mount Hor they set out by way of the Red Sea, to bypass the land of Edom, but the people's patience was worn out by the journey; so the people complained against God and Moses...So the LORD sent among the people seraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of the Israelites died.... So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses: Make a seraph and mount it on a pole, and everyone who has been bitten will **look at it and recover**. Accordingly Moses made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever the serpent bit someone, the person looked at the bronze serpent and recovered!"*

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Forgiveness According to Jesus

- Matthew 9:1-8 – Healing of the paralytic
 - Verse 6 “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”
 - Cf. Mark 2:1-12
- John 20:19-23
 - Verse 23 “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose you retain are retained.” (cf. Matthew 18:18)

God offers us the **gift** of his forgiveness. Don't you want to be forgiven?

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

The Names Signify What It Means

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1423-1424)

- Confession
 - Why is it necessary for us to confess our sins to be healed?
 - Why does “confession” get all the attention?
- Penance
- **Reconciliation**
- **Metanoia**
 - “The Sacrament of Penance must be seen within the context of conversion from sin and a turn to God” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 236).

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What is Required for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

There are four “elements”

1. Contrition
2. Confession
3. Penance
4. Absolution

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What is Contrition?

- The Catechism defines contrition as “Sorrow of the soul and hatred for the sin committed, together with a resolution not to sin again. Contrition is the most important act of the penitent, and is necessary for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance” (glossary, page 872)
- Perfect Contrition
- Imperfect Contrition
 - “When other motives, such as the ugliness of sin or **fear of damnation**, bring us to confession, this is called “imperfect contrition,” which is sufficient for forgiveness in the Sacrament” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 238, my emphasis).

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Act of Contrition

My God,
I am **sorry** for my sins with **all my heart**.
In **choosing** to do wrong
And failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
Whom I should love above all things
I firmly intend, with **your help**,
To do penance,
To sin no more.
And to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
Suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have Mercy.
Amen.

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Penance - Evidence of Our Contrition

(aka satisfaction, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1459-1460)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1430

“Jesus’ call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does **not** aim **first** at **outward works**, “sackcloth and ashes,” fasting and mortification, but at the **conversion of the heart, interior conversion**. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion **urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.**”

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The Prayer of Absolution

God, the Father of mercies,
Through the death and resurrection of his Son
Has **reconciled** the world to himself
And poured out the Holy Spirit
For the **forgiveness of sins**;
Through the ministry of the Church
May God grant you **pardon** and **peace**,
And I absolve you from your sins
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

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Effects of Reconciliation

Of course, we are reconciled with God (restored to a “state of grace”). What Else?

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1468-1470

“Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain **pardon** from God’s mercy for the offense committed against him, **and** are, at the same time, **reconciled with the Church** which they have wounded by their sins and by which by charity, by example and by prayer labors for their conversion.” (*Lumen Gentium*, 10)

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

What People
Might **Fear**
About Going
to Confession

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Why Confess to a **Human** Priest?



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Why Should I Go to Confession?

We Think God Will Not Forgive Us

- We keep doing the same things over and over - not seven times but 77 times (Matthew 18:21-22)
 - So much for "I firmly intend..."

"The only guarantee for failure is to stop trying."

JOHN C. MAXWELL



- It can be easier to forgive others than to forgive ourselves because we might give them the benefit of the doubt, but we know the internal bad thoughts we have.

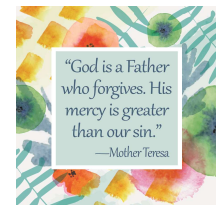
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Why We Might Think God Won't Forgive Us? Cont'd

We know we struggle and/or refuse to forgive others. We assume God is like us and doesn't want to forgive us. The good news is that God is not like us!



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Scrupulosity and Are We Not Worthy

- Maybe we accept God's forgiveness but then look (too hard) to find something else we have done wrong
- Is perfectionism the same as being scrupulous?
- Jesus himself said, "*The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matthew 26:41, Mark 14:38).

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Does God Want to Forgive Us or Punish Us?

From the Old Testament, we hold an image of a punishing God based on passages like Leviticus 24:20 that says an eye for an eye.

Yet, even in the Old Testament, God is merciful. How many times did God rescue his people? (See the repeated cycle most evident in the Book of Judges).

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The Unforgivable Sin

We see Jesus as merciful because He gave his life for us on the Cross yet we read, "*And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit **will not be forgiven**, either in this age or in the age to come*" (Matthew 12:32).

If there is one sin that is unforgivable, there might be many...

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

The **only** thing
that stops God
from forgiving you
is you.

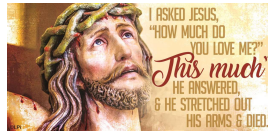
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The Source of God's Forgiveness

- **Forgiveness is a gift we don't merit** - that's what makes it a gift, a gift to the assailant *and to the victim*
- It is God's choice to forgive, and He always does if we repent with a contrite heart.
- If God didn't want to forgive us, then He would not have sent Jesus to die for us.
- John 15:13 – “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”



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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Is Guilt Good or Bad?

“He uses a marvelous term: “*our God-given capacity to feel guilt.*” Guilt is not our enemy, not if we recognize it for what it is and learn how to profit from its ministry to us. Guilt is the voice that pleads with us to face ourselves honestly, then to make right whatever wrongs we have done to others” (Howe, *Guilt*, 13).

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The Third Spiritual Work of Mercy- Admonish the Sinner

- “In this sense, then, it should be noted that correction should be made not as a judgment, but as a service of truth and love, since it addresses the sinner not as an enemy but as a brother (see 2 Thes 3:15). It can thus result in leading a brother who was becoming lost back to life (Jas 5:19)” (*Corporal and Spiritual Works*, 53).
- God admonishes us to help us become who He has made us to be.

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To Feel Forgiven, We Must Let Go

“Sometimes the insight God gives us about our own personal history, and our hurts, is not so much an illumination or understanding that helps us make sense of it all, but rather the serenity *to stop trying to make sense of it all.* It's the gift of surrendering it all to Jesus, bringing our wounds to his, allowing him to touch them, and discovering that Jesus is all we need.” (Berg, *Hurting in the Church*, 134-5)

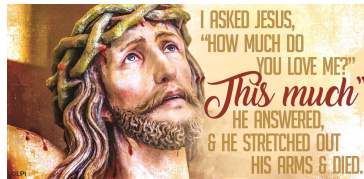
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*“But God proves his love for us in that **while we were still sinners** Christ died for us.”*

Romans 5:8



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What Forgiveness is Not?

“Forgiveness advocates has developed a long list of things that forgiveness is not: it is not pretending that a wrong did not occur; it is not forgetting that it happened, and it is not condoning or excusing it. To the contrary, “forgiveness means admitting that what was done was wrong and should not be repeated.” Similarly, forgiveness is not the same thing as *pardon*. In other words, granting forgiveness does not mean that the wrongdoer is now free from suffering the disciplinary consequences of his or her actions.” (*Amish Grace*, 127).

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

We Could Ask Two Questions

How often should

I go?

People used to go weekly, monthly, ...

Now many seldom, if every go.

The pendulum swung too far.

Examining Your Conscience

Why go at all?

To Be Free, Free of our sins!

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Future Schedule

- March 7th – *Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?*
- When you exit this webinar a short evaluation questionnaire should come up to invite your feedback.
- The slides for this presentation will be available online at www.renewaloffaith.org. Please click on the “What’s New” tab and select this presentation.

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Resources

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Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

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Why Should I Go to Confession?

Resources (cont'd)

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