

THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

Christ who forgave sin and restored healing¹ has willed that the Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit his work of healing and salvation.

RECONCILIATION

The sacrament of Reconciliation enables those who have sinned, that is broken their friendship with God and the community, to be reconciled in God's merciful love, to God and the community.

Reconciliation is an essential aspect of human life. Everyone at some time or another says, thinks or does things which they regret, or sometimes don't do the things they know they should do. Knowing that you have caused hurt or pain to another is not a comfortable feeling. Such hurt is also a turning away from God. There is a desire to acknowledge the fault, to say sorry and ask forgiveness so restoring the bridge which has been broken, this is called conversion, this sacrament helps Catholics become reconciled.

Scripture

Jesus in his life on earth showed great compassion towards those who were sinners, in fact he stated that.

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Luke 5:32

In the following story Jesus forgives the woman because she is reconciled to Jesus through the great love she has shown.

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Luke 7:36-39, 44-50

¹ Mark 2: 1-12

The story of the Prodigal Son is another story of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, Luke 15: 11-32.

It is not easy to ask for forgiveness, but Jesus gave the leaders in the Church the means of helping people to be reconciled with God and each other. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave his disciples the facility to forgive sins in his name through the power of the Holy Spirit

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 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 them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20: 21-23

In the New Testament there is reference to the concept of confessing sins to one another

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

1 John 1:9

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

James 5:16

Mercy is an essential aspect of healing and reconciliation. The Holy Father Pope Francis declared 2015 the Year of Mercy, in his letter announcing this he said:

Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's saving love. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other.

In speaking of the sacrament of Reconciliation on 1 July 2013 Pope Francis said:

In the Sacrament of Penance, "Jesus receives us with all of our limitations, He bring us the mercy of the Father who forgives us, and transforms our heart, rendering it a new heart, capable of loving Him, who loved His own to the end (cf. John 13:1). And this love is manifested in his mercy. Jesus always forgives us."

The names given to this sacrament²

- † *The sacrament of Penance* highlights the need for the penitent to do penance to repair any damage their sins may have done.

² Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1423-1442

- † *The Sacrament of Confession*: since admission of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament
- † *The sacrament of forgiveness*: this emphasises the belief that through the priest's prayer of absolution God grants the forgiveness of sin.
- † *The sacrament of conversion*: this emphasises the call to return to the father from whom one has strayed through sin.
- † *The sacrament of reconciliation*: because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reunites them to God, and to each other.

Who may receive this sacrament?

Christ instituted this sacrament for all members of the Church in need of forgiveness,³ especially those who since their Baptism have become alienated from God and other people, i.e. the community.

What is needed in order to receive this sacrament?⁴

Before receiving this sacrament, it is necessary for the person to examine their conscience, to think over their life and to consider how it could be better and what is holding them back. There may be some fault which they wish to be free of.

Whatever is said to the priest within Confession is absolutely confidential. The priest may never disclose it in any way. That is called *the seal of Confession* and is very important, only God, the priest and person confessing knows what is revealed in confession.

- † **Contrition**: that is to be sorry for the sin and resolve to try not to sin again
- † **Confession**: to admit to a priest the important issues where they are in need of forgiveness.
- † **Reparation**: some sins harm to our neighbour, part of forgiveness may mean doing what is possible to amend the harm. e.g. return stolen goods, etc. Some effort needs to be made to make amendment for the sin. This is also called penance. The priest may suggest the person says a certain prayer or do some kindness depending on what has been confessed.

Who administers this sacrament?⁵

Christ entrusted this sacrament to his apostles, bishops are their successors and priests are collaborators of the bishop. So it is bishops and priests by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders have power to forgive sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit.

³ CCC 1446

⁴ Cf CCC 1450-146

⁵ Cf CCC 1461-1462

How often may a person receive this sacrament?

For Catholics the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a source of joy and comfort. In the sacrament they experience time and again the extraordinary love of God. Through the Sacrament Catholics are strengthened, so that they are made more able to resist sin in the future. The sacrament can be celebrated often. It helps Catholics to be better followers of Jesus.

*The following may be found in more detail in **Church's Story 3 pages 64-67***

The celebration of the sacrament

At the sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest welcomes the person in the name of Jesus. They make the Sign of the Cross together. Sometimes they listen to a passage from the Bible.

The person confesses his or her sins to the priest.

The priest asks them to say or do something to make up for their sins and as a sign that they will try to do better in the future. This is called a penance.

The person prays an act of sorrow, such as:

"O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with the help of your grace I will not sin again."

The promise to make a new start is called a firm purpose of amendment.

The priest then raises his hand over the person and says the words of forgiveness and absolution.

I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Together they say a prayer for God's forgiveness and love.

In Come and See

The sacrament of Reconciliation is studied every year from early years to year 5

Early Years|Friends:

pupils learn about the meaning of friendship both with each other and with Jesus. This is the foundation for beginning to understand the sacrament of Reconciliation

Year 1|Being sorry:

pupils learn about making choosing well and the stories of Jesus forgiving those who did not good choices. Saying sorry leads to happiness and peace with one another and God

Year 2|Rules:

pupils are introduced to the concept of sin and the importance of saying sorry and forgiveness. They are taught about and learn how to make an examination of conscience, say a simple prayer of sorrow.

Year 3 | Choices:

pupils learn more about the sacrament of Reconciliation and what happens at the sacrament. They begin to understand such concepts as conscience, the consequences of sin, sorrow, penance and absolution.

Year 4 | Building bridges:

at this age pupils deepen their understanding of the sacrament of Reconciliation, learning about how necessary it is to build bridges of Reconciliation with God and each other.

Year 5 | Freedom and responsibility:

through studying scripture, especially the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes, pupils learn how God's rules allow people to live responsibly and use freedom well.

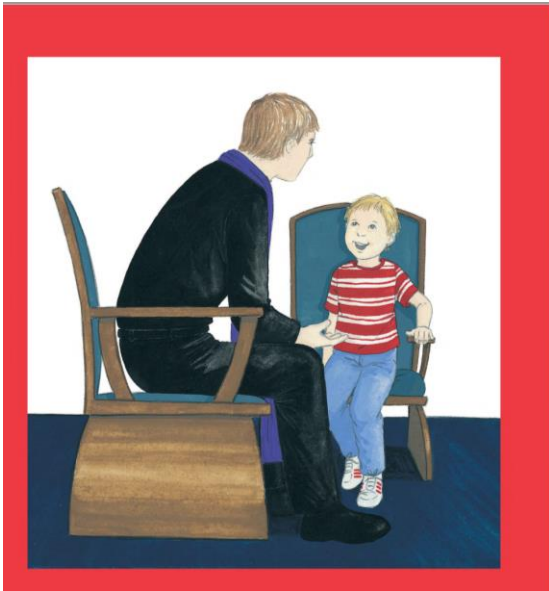
Reconciliation Activities

It is a good idea at the end of each day, to think over what has happened during the day, to thank God for all the good and lovely things that have happened and to remember if there have been times when we have not been very kind or loving. Adults call this an *examination of conscience*. Your conscience is the sense of right and wrong that is inside you and helps you to follow God's rules.

There is a Sacrament, a sign of God's love, that helps Catholics, to examine or look at their consciences and ask for God's forgiveness. It is called the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You think of the sins you are sorry about, the things you have done wrong on purpose. You ask God to forgive you, and tell the priest, who will not tell anyone else. The priest tells you your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name and asks you to make up for them by being kind or by saying a prayer.

- Talk about what is happening in the pictures. What is the priest saying? What do you think the boy is saying?





Sometimes at school and in our parish we come together as God's family to say sorry and to ask God's forgiveness.



We ask God to help us to try harder to be more like Jesus in the future.

Answer these questions together

- What is good to do at the end of the day and why?
- How do you think someone feels who has celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- What does the priest tell you in this Sacrament?
- If you were a priest, what kind of things would you ask someone to do to make things right?
- How can you show you are really sorry?

Choose activities

- With words or images complete the 3 steps to Reconciliation e.g.

*I have upset or hurt... Mary
because I... took her doll*

I am sorry, I say sorry, I am forgiven.

*I can make up by... sharing my toys
I will try not to do it again.*

- Order the sequence of events describing what happens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Think of the things you are sorry about.
 - You ask God to forgive you.
 - You tell the priest.
 - The priest tells you your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name.
 - He asks you to make up for them by being kind or saying a prayer.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Through receiving this sacrament, the sick are healed in spirit, strengthen, given peace and courage to overcome their difficulties. It a sacrament of healing and forgiveness both for the sick and for those who are dying. It celebrates God's gifts of hope, strength and healing, life and friendship with God the Father, with Jesus and with one another.

Scripture

Throughout his life Jesus gave ample evidence that he had come to heal. At the very start of his ministry Jesus gave authority to his disciples to heal the sick and anoint them with oil. ⁶

In the early Church St James mentions what is already accepted practice:

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

James 5: 14-16

The Christian has special concern for the sick. They are not simply the concern of the medical professionals but of the whole Christian community and not only the sick themselves but also those relations and friends who care for them.

I was sick and you took care of me

Matthew 25:36

Taking communion to the sick and housebound in their own homes reinserts them into the life the church. The sick should be at the heart of every Christian community.

The signs and symbols of this sacrament

Oil is used to anoint the sick person. The oil of the sick is a special oil used for the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. It is blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week.

The priest anoints the sick person on the forehead, saying,



⁶ Cf Mark 6: 12-13

“Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

He also anoints the sick person on the hands, saying,

“May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.”

The “raising” refers to spiritual healing, as well as any physical healing that may take place.

The effects of this sacrament

The healing offered by this anointing is forgiveness of sins, hope and inner peace, sometimes physical healing and an assurance of God's steadfast care, even in death. It offers comfort and support.

Who administers this this sacrament?

Only Bishops and priests by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders are ministers of this sacrament.⁷

Who may receive this sacrament?

This sacrament is for who are baptised. It is not only for those in danger of death, but also for those who are gravely ill or are about to undergo a serious operation, for the recovery of their health and for spiritual strength. It is appropriate not only for physical but also for mental illness.

The celebration of the sacrament

There are 2 forms of this sacrament:

1. One for those who are sick, this anointing may take place during Mass, at home or in hospital, it may consist of a simple anointing and prayer.
2. For those who are dying or in grave danger of death, may receive three sacraments if they are able to: Reconciliation, Anointing and Holy Communion.

Celebration of the sacrament within Mass

There are three sections to the celebration:

- There is a prayer of faith asking God's help for the person who is sick.
- The laying on of hands by the priest, which is a sign of blessing and the invocation of the Holy Spirit to come upon the sick person.
- The anointing with the Oil on the forehead and hands of the sick person.



⁷ CCC 1516

Check *Church's Story 3* pages 68-71 for further details

In Come and See

Year 6 | Healing:

This Sacrament is studied in the section on Reconciliation and deals with the care of the sick and the background and details of the sacrament