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Bread of Life

## Lesson 2: How to Make a Good Confession

### Opening Prayer

*Every Sinner Receives Christ's Pardon* (A sentence that will help you remember the five steps of a good confession)

**E**—Examination of Conscience

**S**—Sorrow

**R**—Resolve

**C**—Confession to a priest

**P**—Penance

- **Step 1—Examination of Conscience (LBC page #51)**
  - **Good and Evil**
    - Evil is not something in and of itself. It is a *lack* or *deprivation* of good. We need to look at our good actions in order to better see where we are lacking in that good.
    - When we choose the good, we call it **virtue**.
    - When we choose the bad, we call it **sin**. Sin is always our choice, which we choose with our free will.
  - Sin has different degrees, in how much it lacks good, how much it deprives us or others of the good.
    - **Mortal Sin**—a grave or serious offense against the law of God.
    - **Venial Sin**—a less serious offense against the law of God.
- **Step 2—Sorrow (LBC page #33)**
  - In order for our sins to be forgiven, we must be truly sorry for them.
    - True sorrow for our sins is called **contrition**. There are two kinds of contrition: perfect and imperfect.
    - **Perfect Contrition**: when we are sorry for our sins because they offend God, Whom we should love above all things.
    - **Imperfect Contrition**: when we are sorry for our sins because we fear punishment.

- **Step 3—Resolve (LBC page #34)**
  - If we are truly sorry for our sins, then we will make the resolution not to commit them again.
- **Step 4—Confess our sins to the priest (LBC page #36)**
- **Step 5—Penance (LBC page #37)**
- **Frequently Asked Questions about the Sacrament of Penance**
  - **Why do I have to confess my sins to a priest?**
    - \*Jesus heals the paralytic\*--only God can forgive sins.
    - John 20:20—peace be with you...Holy Spirit...sins you have forgiven are forgiven and whose sins you have retained are retained.
  - **Why would a priest not absolve someone?**
    - If there is no sorrow and no resolve.
    - If there is any indication that they are willingly and persistently staying in sin.
  - **What if I am not Catholic?**
    - Non-Catholics can go to confession and receive advice, but they cannot receive absolution from the priest since they are not Catholic.
  - **Can a priest reveal a serious sin such as murder?**
    - No. He is bound by the “seal of confession”, which binds the priest from revealing anything he has heard in confession to anyone, no matter what. He must be willing to die rather than reveal it.
    - St. John Nepomucene—martyred to protect the seal of confession.
  - **Is it better to confess face-to-face or behind the screen?**
    - It is up to the preference of the penitent.
  - **Can you write your sins down?**
    - Absolutely. You can write them down and bring that paper with you to help you remember.
  - **How often should you go to confession?**
    - It is best to go regularly.
    - According to the laws of the Church, the faithful are to receive the sacrament of confession at least once a year.
  - **What if I have never been to confession or it has been a long time since my last confession? How do I prepare?**

- Examine your conscience every day to be mindful and aware of your sins. It may also help to write them down so you can remember.
- **What is a mortal sin?**
  - Any grievous or serious offense against the laws of God.
  - Severs our relationship with God and kills the life of grace in our soul.
  - Can only be forgiven through the sacrament of confession.
- **What is a venial sin?**
  - A less serious offense
  - Weakens our relationship with Christ.
  - Forgiven at Mass, or when we receive Holy Communion.
- **\*\*Analogy of mortal and venial sin\*\***
  - Bugs on windshield: inconvenient, but you can still drive. Eventually, if there are too many, you have to pull over and wipe it off so you can see clearly again. (Venial sin)
  - Hit a deer: you immediately have to stop and get it taken care of. (Mortal sin)
- **Are all sins equal in the eyes of God?**
  - No. Deprivation of good is not always equal. That is why there are mortal and venial sins. (killing someone vs taking a candy bar).
- **Do I have to confess every sin?**
  - We must confess all mortal sins. It is best to confess all venial sins as well, since we get special grace in confession that helps us to overcome those particular sins that we have confessed.
  - If we ever get out of confession and forget one, we don't have to go back and confess it again. As long as we do not purposefully withhold any sins, they are all forgiven.
  - If we hold back a mortal sin on purpose (out of embarrassment or some other reason), then it invalidates the confession. None of our sins are forgiven, and we have committed another mortal sin called sacrilege.
- **Why confess if I'm just going to sin again?**
  - If we do not have sorrow and resolve, then yes, there is no point.
  - *\*example\**--medic does not refuse to remove a bullet just saying that the soldier will go out and get shot again so there is no point. No, he cleans and binds and strengthens the soldier.
  - Sometimes the thought of having to go back to confession and tell the priest your sins will keep you from doing it.
- **What is contrition?**
  - Sincere sorrow for having offended God.
- **What is penance?**
  - Covered in the lesson.