

A Short Teaching on Sacramental Confession
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Walk with me through my confession last week... You'll need a bible... Genesis 4:1:16.

Scripture References: With assurance I confess to my Brother trusting in the Mercy of God...

Confession: Num 5:6f, Matt 3:6, Acts 19:18, James 5:16....Absolution: Matt 16:19, 18:18 and John 20:22f....Penance: Psalm 6:7, Matt 3:8, Luke 3:8, Acts 2:38 and 8:22, 2 Cor chapters 7-10.

[1] Examination of Conscience – Part One - The story of Cain and Abel (I am Cain).

:5 – Suffering from resentment and being crestfallen.

:6 – I heard God speaking to me asking Why am I resentful and crestfallen?

:6 - God (in conscience) asking me to master myself [or 'get over myself']

:7 - I ignored God's help and did it anyway (reacted poorly)

:8 – Again I heard God ask of my stewardship for my brothers (He did not accuse me, He asked me about the natural instinct to do the right thing and for me to consider my actions)

:9 – I ignored God and excused myself

:10 – 13 – The crushing truth surrounded me and all around me.

:14 – 16 – Remedy was needed otherwise I would 'avoid your presence and wander the earth'

[2] Confession – Part Two

Since the Priest is persona Christi, I spoke to him as in the physical presence of the Lord.

After naming the thing I did, I said...Lord, I have come to the conclusion that sometimes I just don't care what you think. I knew I was upset (:5) and I heard you counsel me (:6) but I just didn't care what you wanted me to do (:7) it was immediately obvious it was wrong (:8) and I am out of excuses since I have used up every excuse I can think of (:9) and the pain of my sin crushes me and all around me (:10-13) without your mercy I will wander the earth without hope.

The priest then engaged me in dialog which really helped. What are the possible causes for my resentment? He helped with the bigger picture in Christ. He made practical suggestions on how to avoid doing this in the future. He prescribed actions to repair relations and restore property.

[3] Act of Contrition – Part Three - with all the sincerity I have to offer... I pray...

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.

[4] Absolution Prayer – Part Four – I relax into the loving sound of God's voice... the Priest prays aloud over me..

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give 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.

[5] Penance – Part Five – set about doing the things prescribed.

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry