

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION



A senior tax collector named Zacchaeus longed to see Jesus. He was short and hence he could not see Jesus from among the crowd. Hence he ran ahead and got on to a Sycamore tree and sat there. Jesus was going along that way. When Jesus reached the foot of that tree, he looked at him and said: “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5). Listening to this, Zacchaeus came down immediately and received Jesus very happily.

Zacchaeus experienced the loving presence of Jesus and listened to His words and repented of his sins. He confessed his sins to Jesus

and assured him that he will atone for them. **Lord, I give half of my wealth to the poor and if I have cheated anyone, I return four-fold to them** (Luke 19:8).

Then Jesus said to him. “Today salvation has come to this house”(Luke19:9). Thus, Zacchaeus, who repented of his sins, confessed them and gave the assurance to atone for them, received forgiveness of sins and salvation.

The sacrament of reconciliation is the sacrament that forgives our sins, strengthens us not to sin again and reconciles us to God and our brethren.

The church today, in the sacrament of reconciliation, forgives our sins. It is Jesus himself who forgives our sins through the church God always waits for us sinners in the sacrament of reconciliation, just as the father waited for his lost son. God is like the shepherd who goes after the one strayed sheep among the hundred. We who move away from God through sin, get reconciled with Him in the sacrament of reconciliation.

Five conditions to receive this sacrament of reconciliation Effectively:

1. Examine your conscience and find out your sins
2. Repent of your sins
3. Take a firm decision not to sin again
4. Confess your sins to a priest
5. Do the penance given by the priest.



When we prepare ourselves properly and receive the sacrament of reconciliation, we get forgiveness of sins and the grace not to commit the sin again. In addition to that we get inner peace and joy. These are the fruits of the sacrament of reconciliation.

We have the responsibility to atone for the sins that are forgiven in the sacrament of reconciliation. We are making amends for the failures in our relationships and duties towards God, others and ourselves through sin. **Besides the penance given by the priest, we have to atone for our sins by deeds of charity and mercy, prayer and sacrifices.** If we have taken anything of others we have to return them to the owner.

In the sacrament of reconciliation repentance for our sins is the most important thing. If we have no contrition, sins will not be forgiven. Whenever we sin, we must repent immediately and ask pardon from God. If the sin is serious and mortal, receive the sacrament of reconciliation and get forgiveness as early as possible.

Let us pray

Jesus who loves sinners, give us the sense of sin and repentance. Help us to renounce evil and grow in goodness.

Let us read the word of God with devotion

Luke 15: 1-10



My decision

I will receive the sacrament of reconciliation at least once in a month.

Let us do

By heart the preparatory prayer before receiving the sacrament of reconciliation.

Prayer before confession

I confess to Almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do.

And I ask blessed Mary, ever Virgin, and all the angels and saints and you, my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord, our God. **Amen.**

Let us find out the answers

1. What is the sacrament of reconciliation?
2. What are the fruits of the sacrament of reconciliation?
3. What are the conditions to receive the sacrament of reconciliation properly?
4. What extra things are we to do besides the penance that the priest gives in order to complete our atonement of sins?