

THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

Once some people brought to Jesus a paralyzed man carried on a mat by four of them. When he saw their faith, he said to the paralytic: **“Son, your sins are forgiven.”** As some scribes criticized him, Jesus said: **“...you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”** Afterwards he said to the paralytic: **“...take your mat, and go to your home.”** And he went home (Mk 2:11).

Several times, Jesus has revealed that he has the power to absolve sins. He said to the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears: **“Your sins are forgiven.”** (Lk. 7:48). Granting forgiveness to the woman caught in adultery, Jesus said: **“...from now on do not sin again”** (Jn. 8:11). Jesus entrusted the Church with his power to forgive sins. The resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples and said: **“As the Father has sent me, so I send you... 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.”** (Jn. 20:21-23).



The purpose of the sacraments of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is to grant forgiveness of sins and health in a special way; and hence they are called the Sacraments of Healing.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

We, the sinners, experience the infinite love and mercy through this sacrament. Granting forgiveness of sins and the power not to err again, this sacrament reconciles us with God and man.

Reconciliation has Four Levels

The sin of a person brings upon him four types of ruin: the father-son relationship between God and man is disrupted with sin; the relationship between man and man is ruined; the bond with himself as well as with the world is strained.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Sacrament of Confession

To err is human. All of us wish for pardon for our sins. The people belonging to other religions resort to fasting, visit pilgrim centres and bathe in holy waters for expiation of sins. The confession of sins, even humanly speaking, releases and helps reconciling with others. When we confess our sins to a priest, the representative of the Church community, entrusted, by Jesus, with the power to forgive sins, we can reconcile ourselves with God and the Church community and restore the lost status of the son of

ACTIVITY - 1

Divide the children into two or three groups and ask them to present in the class one or two skits based on the following passages

Mk. 2: 1- 12;

Lk. 7:36-49;

Jn. 8: 1-11;

Lk. 15: 11-24.



God. Hence, the core factor of this sacrament is confession of sins to a priest. St. Augustine teaches: “Confession of evil deeds is the beginning of good deeds.” To denote the character of this sacrament, it is named as **Confession**.

A Sacrament of Pardon and Forgiveness

Jesus revealed the depth of his Father's love and mercy through the parable of the prodigal son. We personally experience his love and mercy, when we are granted pardon for our sins. When God grants pardon, our sins are forgiven. Reconciliation is a sacrament of pardon and forgiveness and it makes us experience the pardoning life of Jesus.

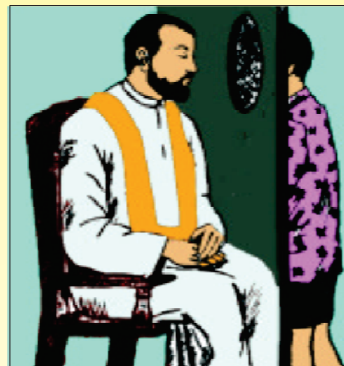
Forgiveness of Sins through the Priest

Jesus has entrusted his Church with the power to forgive sins. This sacrament is celebrated through the priest, the representative of the Church. The priest will never leak out the sins confessed to him in any circumstance; he will never say or act on the basis of what he heard in the confession. He is obliged to keep it a tight secret even at the cost of his death.

There are Five Requisites to Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation Worthily

1. Examination of conscience

Examine carefully the period of our life since the last confession and find out the failings. There will be sins of commission and that of omission. The examination of



conscience should be done with respect to the Ten Commandments, the precepts of the Church and the duties according to our vocation in life.

2. Contrition

Every error is an act against God's love. When contrition arises out of the thought that we hurt God with sin and the consequent sorrow and an aversion towards sin, it is called 'perfect' contrition. Then we are able to confess like the prodigal son, "Lord, I have sinned against you." The core of contrition is the mental attitude to leave all the chances of sin and return to Jesus.

3. Resolution

Real repentance leads us to a resolution not to repeat the mistakes; readiness to avoid the circumstance leading to sin will also be there. We have to pray for the blessing to fulfil the resolution taken.

4. Confession

Confess every sin to the priest; Mention especially the nature and number of mortal sins. We reveal, here, our broadminded attitude both to Jesus and the Church.

5. Penance

Carefully pay attention to the penance imposed by the priest and fulfil it. In addition to the given penance, we may resort to some other remedial acts on our own. Once the priest finishes giving penance, bend your head in respect and accept forgiveness of sins. During this time, recite silently the act of contrition and implore Jesus for forgiveness of sins and grace. While preparing for confession, recalling the sins, we can recite the act of contrition.

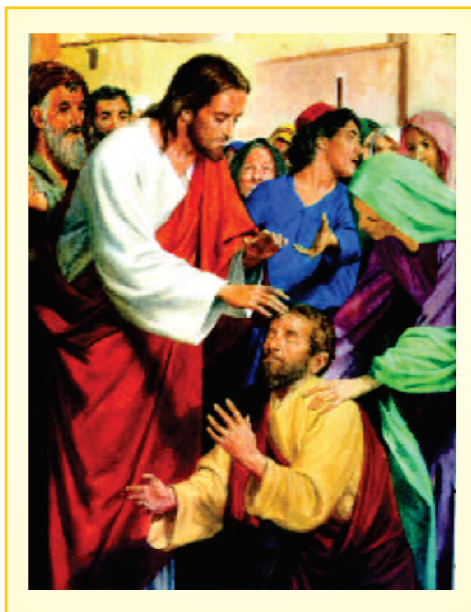
Let us try to receive this sacrament that grants forgiveness of sin and health and peace to both body and mind, frequently.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

During Jesus' public life, Jesus healed many sick people. Roaming across many towns and villages Jesus preached the gospel and healed the sick and the afflicted (Mt. 9:35). The book of Genesis affirms that sickness and suffering cropped into the lives of people on account of sin. God created man in a state of bliss; when he committed sin, happiness has been replaced by disease and pain. **Sickness is a condition persuading man to turn to God.**

God grants healing. Man, in illness, should take refuge in God. In the ancient Church, this conviction was very strong. St. James says: **“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 (Jas. 5:14-15).**

The anointing of the sick grants forgiveness of sin and recovery from sickness and thereby gives health both for our body and spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit received through this sacrament leads a patient to the health of his soul; God willing he regains bodily health as well. The anointing of the sick helps us place our trust in the divine mercy and accept illness, tribulations and afflictions with equanimity. Generally, we receive this sacrament in a critical stage of illness. If necessary, this sacrament can be received more than once.



The Celebration of the Sacrament

“May Christ, who, through baptism, made us participate in his death and resurrection, sanctify you.” With this prayer the celebrant sprinkles holy water in the room of the patient. Until karozytha prayer, the rites of the holy Qurbana are followed. Following this, the oil for anointing is blessed with a prayer. **May this anointing relieve pain, remove distress, heal**

wounds and restore health to body and soul."The prayer ends with a praise of the Holy Trinity. Thereafter, the celebrant recites the prayer of blessing extending his right palm downward. In the ensuing anointing he prays for forgiveness of sins and health of body and mind. Applying the oil on the forehead, eyes, ears, lips, hands and legs the celebrant implores God's mercy to grant pardon for the sins committed with the different organs.



There ensues the hymn "God heal those with desperate hearts." The community prays for the patient reciting the karozutha of reconciliation. The celebrant prays, thanking God for sending his dear son, to give forgiveness to sinners, health for the sick and comfort to the afflicted; he praises God for granting the patient bodily and spiritual relief as well. He requests the assistance of St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Thomas and all the saints on behalf of the patient. After blessing the patient as well as the community, the celebrant makes the patient kiss the cross.

Let us be ready to receive this sacrament of healing whenever necessary and experience the love and mercy of Jesus.

**LET US
READ AND
MEDITATE THE
WORD OF GOD**

(1 Cor. 11 : 27 - 31)



A Verse to Remember

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

(Jn 20:23).

Let us Pray

Jesus, the eternal priest, please empower us to offer the holy Qurbana, which you have given to the Church sacrificing yourself, with purity of heart.

My Resolution

Once fortnightly ,
I will receive the
sacrament of
reconciliation.

Teachings of the Fathers of the Church

There is medicine for every ailment. If any one incurred an injury with the attack of satan, let him inform the priest and get treated by the physician. God pardons those who confess their sins.

(Aphrahat)

QUESTIONS

1. The Church is entrusted, with the power to forgive sins, by Jesus. Elucidate.
2. What do you mean by examination of conscience?
3. What is the essence of contrition?
4. How should one prepare to receive the experience for forgiveness of sins?
5. Describe the sacrament of the anointing of the sick?