

SINCERE AND FREQUENT CONFESSION

WHERE THE GREATEST MIRACLES TAKE PLACE

In her love for Jesus, Saint Faustina wrote that she would rather suffer a thousand hells than commit even the smallest venial sin. She wrote this after a profound experience in which God gave her to know how horrible sin was:

March 15, 1937. Today, I entered into the bitterness of the Passion of the Lord Jesus. I suffered in a purely spiritual way. *I learned how horrible sin was.* God gave me to know the whole hideousness of sin. I learned in the depths of my soul how horrible sin was, even the smallest sin, and how much it tormented the soul of Jesus. I would rather suffer a thousand hells than commit even the smallest venial sin. (*Diary*¹, 1016, italics added for emphasis)

Even the smallest sin torments the soul of Jesus, so in our love for Him we should endeavor to avoid sin at all cost. Yet, we are of the flesh and we are weak. Evil seems to be escalating and temptations surround us as never before. We are in great need of grace to give us strength to resist evil temptations and to keep us free from sin. We are in great need of grace to heal us from our past transgressions and to reconcile us with God and neighbor. We are in great need the most neglected Sacrament in the Church today and that is the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (CCC 1440)

Pray for souls that they be not afraid to approach the tribunal of My mercy. Do not grow weary of praying for sinners. You know what a burden their souls are to My Heart. Relieve My deathly sorrow; dispense My mercy. (975)

Despite the great suffering our sins inflict upon the Lord, He pleads with us to turn to Him to receive His mercy and healing, no matter what it is we may, *or may not*, have done:

Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy. (699)

To emphasize the importance of the Sacrament of Penance, the Lord made going to Confession one of the conditions for obtaining His promise of complete forgiveness of sins and punishment for those who observe the Feast of Mercy. What an extraordinary gift this is to those who respond to this invitation from The Divine Mercy:

Write, speak of My mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy. [Sacrament of Reconciliation] There the greatest miracles take place [and] are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one's misery, and the

miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated. Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no [hope of] restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. Oh, how miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy! You will call out in vain, but it will be too late. (1448)

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION

Saint Faustina was told that the things she wrote in her Diary were to be of great profit to souls. Concerning holy confession, she wrote:

We should derive two kinds of profit from Holy Confession:

1. We come to confession to be healed;
2. We come to be educated - like a small child, our soul has constant need of education.

O my Jesus, I understand these words to their very depths, and I know from my own experience that, on its own strength, the soul will not go far; it will exert itself greatly and will do nothing for the glory of God; it will err continually, because our mind is darkened and does not know how to discern its own affairs. (377)

In passage 113 she writes specifically to souls striving for sanctity about how to best benefit from confession. Thank you St. Faustina for thinking about us and for your words of wisdom. Please pray for us to reap great profit from this sacrament:

And again, I would like to say three words to the soul that is determined to strive for sanctity and to derive fruit; that is to say, benefit from confession.

First word - complete sincerity and openness. Even the holiest and wisest confessor cannot forcibly pour into the soul what he desires if it is not sincere and open. An insincere, secretive soul risks great dangers in the spiritual life, and even the Lord Jesus Himself does not give Himself to such a soul on a higher level, because He knows it would derive no benefit from these special graces.

Second word - humility. A soul does not benefit as it should from the sacrament of confession if it is not humble. Pride keeps it in darkness. The soul neither knows how, nor is it willing, to probe with precision the depths of its own misery. It puts on a mask and avoids everything that might bring it recovery.

Third word - obedience. A disobedient soul will win no victory, even if the Lord Jesus Himself, in person, were to hear its confession. The most experienced confessor will be of no help whatsoever to such a soul. The disobedient soul exposes itself to great misfortunes; it will make no progress toward perfection, nor will it succeed in the spiritual life. God lavishes His graces most generously upon the soul, but it must be an obedient soul. (113)

ST. FAUSTINA'S PERSONAL APPROACH TO CONFESSION

As we strive to make good, sincere confessions as St. Faustina advises, we may also want to practice her personal approach to the sacrament:

As regards Holy Confession, I shall choose what costs and humiliates me most. Sometimes a trifle costs more than something greater. I will call to

mind the Passion of Jesus at each confession, to arouse my heart to contrition. Insofar as possible, with the grace of God, I will always practice perfect contrition.² I will devote more time to this contrition. Before I approach the confessional, I shall first enter the open and most merciful Heart of the Savior. When I leave the confessional, I shall rouse in my soul great gratitude to the Holy Trinity for this wonderful and inconceivable miracle of mercy that is wrought in my soul. And the more miserable my soul is, the more I feel the ocean of God's mercy engulfing me and giving me strength and great power. (225)

In order to receive the sacrament of Penance as to be absolved of our sins and open to receiving the strength and power St. Faustina writes of, we must:

- 1) Examine our conscience (link to Examination of Conscience one for kids one for adults), making is a sincere effort to call to mind all the sins we have committed since our last confession
- 2) Have sorrow for our sins
- 3) Resolve not to sin again
- 4) Confess our sins to a priest
- 5) Complete the penance given by the priest

Many who reject this opportunity for the gift of mercy do so because they believe it should not be necessary to tell ones sins to a priest. This is a sad misunderstanding of the role of the priest in this sacrament. The Lord speaks about this Himself:

Today, the Lord has been teaching me, once again, how I am to approach the Sacrament of Penance: **My daughter, just as you prepare in My presence, so also you make your confession before Me. The person of the priest is, for Me, only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a priest it is that I am making use of; open your soul in confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light.** (1725)

Today the Lord said to me, **Daughter, when you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul and ennoble it. Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy. Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity. The torrents of grace inundate humble souls. The proud remain always in poverty and misery, because My grace turns away from them to humble souls.** (1602)

Many who frequent this sacrament have awesome stories to share that clearly reveal God's presence in the confessional. Saint Faustina shares one of hers with us:

As I was preparing for confession, I said to Jesus, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, "Jesus, I beg You to speak to me through the mouth of this priest. And this will be a sign to me, because he does not know at all that You want me to establish that Congregation of Mercy. Let him say something to me about this mercy."

When I approached the confessional and started my confession, the priest interrupted me and started telling me about the great mercy of God, and he spoke more forcefully about it than I had ever heard anyone speak before. And he asked me, “Do you know that the mercy of the Lord is greater than all His works, that it is the crown of His works?” And I listened attentively to these words which the Lord was speaking through the mouth of the priest. Although I believe that it is always God who speaks through the lips of the priest in the confessional, I experienced it in a special way on that occasion.

Although I did not reveal anything of the divine life which is in my soul and only accused myself of my offenses, the priest himself told me very much of what was in my soul and put me under obligation to be faithful to the inspirations of God. He said to me, “You are going through life with the Mother of God, who faithfully responded to every divine inspiration.” O my Jesus, who can ever comprehend Your goodness? (637)

HOW OFTEN SHOULD ONE COME TO CONFESSION?

Monthly confession is quite common among those striving for perfection, yet one can come to Confession as often as necessary. According to Church command it is required at least once a year, and prior to receiving Holy Communion if one is guilty of mortal sin. Regardless of how long it has been, or how serious the sin, we should embrace the Sacrament of Reconciliation with joy, for here the greatest miracles take place. Here we will always meet our loving Father, the God of mercy:

Child, do not run away from your Father; be willing to talk openly with your God of mercy who wants to speak words of pardon and lavish his graces on you. How dear your soul is to Me!

You have conquered, O Lord, my stony heart with Your goodness. In trust and humility I approach the tribunal of Your mercy, where You Yourself absolve me by the hand of your representative. O Lord, I feel Your grace and Your peace filling my poor soul. I feel overwhelmed by Your mercy, O Lord. You forgive me, which is more than I dared to hope for or could imagine. Your goodness surpasses all my desires. And now, filled with gratitude for so many graces, I invite You to my heart. I wandered, like a prodigal child gone astray; but you did not cease to be my Father. (1485)

Resources

1. [Examination of Conscience for Adults Download](#)
2. [Examination of Conscience for Children Download](#)
3. Fr. Michael speaks 'The Wonderful Sacrament of Penance'. 33 mins http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PzPkiEHZWE

View this article online at www.DivineMercyforAmerica.org/Devotion-to-the-Blessed-Mother/

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¹ All references to Diary: Diary of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul © 1987 Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M, Stockbridge, MA 01263. All rights reserved. www.marian.org

² **Perfect contrition - repentance for sins which is motivated by the love of God.**