



## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

---

**20 November 2018, 9:00 AM**

### **Part 19: Helps for discernment: regular confession**

Going to Confession is helpful when you are trying to learn if God is calling you to be a single person or married, a religious or a priest.

It is helpful, if for no other reason because it helps us grow in humility. We grow in our knowledge of God: The Lord, The Lord, a Merciful and Gracious God, slow to anger, and rich in kindness and fidelity.

And we grow in our knowledge of self: we relate to God with holy fear, by saying “yes” to God’s plan, even when it is mysterious, if for no other reason because it is God’s will and so without appeal.

No one really likes confessing our sins to a priest. And so, we make excuses to avoid it, like insisting that we can confess our sins directly to God. As hard as it is to go to Confession, there are good reasons to do it:

- 1) Jesus himself gave priests the authority to continue his ministry of healing by forgiving sins in his name (see John 20:21-23).
- 2) Confessing our sins to a priest can result in healing (see James 5:16-20).
- 3) Both Jesus and Church members are offended by our sin, so we need to be reconciled with both, which can happen in Confession because the priest stands in for both (see Matthew 16:19).
- 4) The absolution the priest gives assures us that God has forgiven us. We need not worry if we were sorry enough, or if God heard us.
- 5) The priest isn’t allowed to tell anyone what we confessed, and so Confession is a safe place to tell our sins, to talk about our struggles.
- 6) Going to Confession reminds us we are human, and therefore weak, and easily tempted, and so we don’t judge others or ourselves (see 1 Cor 4:3).
- 7) Going to Confession challenges us to live better. Even the saints confessed their sins, with great benefit (see Proverbs 24:16).
- 8) Going to Confession makes the angels and saints rejoice (see Luke 15:7).

In addition, we also receive grace, which helps us to resist temptation, stop sinning, and do good deeds.

And the gravy on the taters is the GREAT feeling when we're finished, like a great weight is lifted off us!

So, run, don't walk to confession. It's not the easiest thing, but we would be hard pressed to find something that benefits us more.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque