THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

RCIC FAMILY PROGRAM
WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT RECONCILIATION?

- CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST = PRIMARY FORM OF RECONCILIATION
- “LEX ORANDI; LEX CREDENDI – AS WE PRAY, WE BELIEVE”
- EUCHARISTIC PRAYER = TEACHES US WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT RECONCILIATION
LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Two Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick
- Divine Life received through Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist weakened by sin
- Christ – The Divine Physician instituted these sacraments to continue His ministry of healing and salvation

LESSON OBJECTIVES
“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Sprit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

JOHN 20:19-23
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

► VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF SIN AND RECONCILIATION

► HISTORICAL PROGRESSION
  ► THE EARLY CHURCH
  ► CANONICAL PENANCE – 2ND TO 6TH CENTURIES
  ► MONASTIC PENANCE – 5TH TO 11TH CENTURIES
  ► TARIFF PENANCE – 9TH TO 10TH CENTURIES
  ► VATICAN II

► OUR EXPERIENCE TODAY

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- Immediately before He instituted the sacrament of Reconciliation, Christ said, “Peace be with you.” What do I think Christ means by “peace”?

- What connection, if any, is there between “peace” and the mercy of God?

- Are there any areas of your life that are in particular need of Christ’s peace?

- What does it mean to experience God’s “pardon and peace”? 
THE AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

The power to “bind and loose”:

*Whomever you exclude from your communion, will be excluded from communion with God.*

*Whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will welcome back into his.*

*Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.*

— Matthew 18:18

“*Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*”

— CCC#’s 1444-45
4 ELEMENTS OF . . .

Contrition  Confession  Penance  Absolution

. . . THE RITE OF PENANCE
HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

PREPARING
1. Examination of Conscience
2. Awareness of sin
3. Contrition
4. Resolution to avoid sin again

CONFESSING
1. Sign of the Cross
2. “Bless me, Father…”
3. Confession of sins
4. Advice / Penance
5. Act of Contrition
6. Absolution
WHY CONFESS TO A PRIEST?

“Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.”

- James 5:14-16
MORE GOOD REASONS TO CONFESS . . .

1. First gift of Christ on Easter: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (Jn. 20:22-23)

2. Sin is **never** a private matter. This sacrament reconciles us with Christ as well as with His Body, the Church.

3. This doctrine was **solemnly confirmed** by the Church at the Council of Trent (1545-63).

“**You’re not confessing! You’re bragging!”**

CCC #1443-45
“Confession heals, confession justifies, confession grants pardon of sin; all hope consists in confession; in confession there is a chance for mercy. Believe it firmly.”

St. Isidore of Seville (560-636)

“In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)

“Go to your confessor, open your heart thoroughly, let him see every corner of your soul, and take all his advice with the utmost simplicity and humility, for God loves obedience, and He often makes the counsel we take, especially that of the guides of souls, to be more useful than would seem likely…”

St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622)

“Our Lord Himself I saw in . . . this venerable Sacrament . . . . I felt as if my chains fell, as those of St. Peter at the touch of the divine messenger. My God, what new scenes for my soul!”

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821)
TWO-FOLD POWER OF RECONCILIATION

Increase of Divine Life

Forgiveness of Sin

CCC #1458
WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE?

The remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins for which the guilt, or eternal punishment (i.e., hell), has already been forgiven.

- **PARTIAL:** Removes part of the temporal punishment due to sin

- **PLENARY:** Removes all of the temporal punishment due to sin

HOW DO I OBTAIN A PLENARY INDULGENCE?

1. Complete of the prescribed act itself
2. Be free from the attachment to any sin, even venial
3. Receive absolution through the Sacrament of Reconciliation
4. Receive the most Holy Eucharist
5. Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Resources: Enchiridion of Indulgences; Primer on Indulgences (Catholic Answers); CCC #1471-1479; Indulgentiarium Doctrina
REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What is my attitude toward the sacrament of Reconciliation?

2. Do I understand the sacrament of Reconciliation as being an essential part of my ongoing, interior conversion to Christ?

3. Are there any obstacles that keep me from going to confession regularly?
SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING
OF THE SICK
ANointing of the Sick

Graces conferred:

1. Helps sick person unite suffering to those of Christ
2. Give comfort, peace, courage, and forgiveness
3. Restoration of physical health (God willing)

CCC #1499-1532
Viaticum: Eucharist for those on the threshold of death

Last Rites:
- Sacrament of Penance
- Anointing of the Sick
- Viaticum

Viaticum – Food for the Journey
REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Confession, is called a "sacrament of healing." Have I experienced "healing" in this sacrament? What have been my most meaningful experiences of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? How did I feel as I left the confessional?

2. Why do Catholics confess their sins to a priest? Why do I have to be reconciled not only with God, but also with the Church?

3. The Anointing of the Sick is an integral part of the Church's ministry to the sick and dying. How do I reach out to those who are suffering? What do the sick, elderly, and dying contribute to the Church?