

A few weeks ago?

Last year?

Quite some time ago?

If it has been more than a few weeks ago since you met Jesus in this way, then you probably don't realise all of the joy and peace you have been missing out on.

You might have thought, oh, that's just too difficult!

But isn't it really more difficult to live without knowing the forgiveness of Jesus in a personal way?

One day we **will** meet Jesus face to face, and each visit to Him in the sacrament of reconciliation will make that Meeting so much happier and full of Joy, because in this sacrament we learn to believe and to trust in His Mercy.

These pages were written to make meeting Merciful Jesus in this way just that bit easier for you.

In visiting Jesus in this sacrament, we acknowledge that we are sinners, and that we have sinned in quite concrete ways against Him and against the people in our lives.


This is the truth.

We also acknowledge that it is only Jesus, by the tortures, crucifixion and death that He endured for us, that can take our sins away.

This is the truth, too.

He did this because He loves us, because He wants to forgive us, because He wants to heal us, because He wants us to live in Joy with Him in heaven forever. He would go through it all again if He had to, to make you understand how much He loves you and desires to show Mercy to you.

He waits there in the confessional, longing to help you, bursting to help you and pour His balm on your wounded soul. But he doesn't force Himself on anyone, so He waits and He waits and counts the minutes until you give Him the next opportunity to show His Mercy to you.



Steps to take . . .

+ Decide to go

+ Pick up a church bulletin, it will have Reconciliation times and locations on it.

+ Choose a time and date, and stick to it.

(Another option is to ring your parish priest for an appointment at a more convenient time. You may also wish to do this if you suspect that you might need half an hour or so to give all your sin to Jesus and seek His direction and help in your life in this way.)

+ Ask a friend to go with you and pray for you while you are meeting with Jesus. (*optional*)

+ Prepare. Ask the Holy Spirit and your guardian angel to help you to search your conscience, and to want to be reconciled and turn away from sin.

+ If there is a relationship or a situation that needs to be put right, Start the process.


+ Pray for a good confession, ask Mary, mother of Jesus to help you.

+ Pray for the priest, for enlightenment, for the words of Jesus for you.

+ Afterwards, as well as your penance, spend time thanking and praising Jesus for the gift of His Mercy towards you.

+ Make a commitment to Jesus to return regularly At Fatima and elsewhere, Our Lady has encouraged monthly visits to Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

+ Remember, in His Mercy, no sin is too big to be forgiven. The bigger the sin, the more ardently does He want to show you His Mercy.



Yes ,

Jesus uses the frail instrument of the priest to bring His Mercy to you in this sacrament.

Jesus is still truly there, even if the personality of the priest irritates you. While it is true that some priests are more gifted in the confessional than others, Jesus still speaks through each one of them, as though He were present in flesh and blood, talking directly to you.

Bl. Faustina, to whom Jesus revealed His Mercy in a special way, encourages us to pray for the priest who will minister Jesus' Mercy to us, to pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire him with the words of Jesus. If you are concerned, pray, and you will be blown away by the speed and kindness with which Jesus answers such a prayer.

Don't be afraid to tell Jesus about all the marks of sin on your soul. Although He uses the priest, be assured there is nothing you can say that the priest hasn't heard before, even the most icky stuff, those things that are not easy for you to admit even to yourself. But know that Jesus wants to hear it from you, He cannot help or heal or forgive you unless you tell Him via the priest.

If you haven't met Jesus in this amazing sacrament for a while, tell the priest, and ask him to guide you through it. It will delight him and Jesus to help you in this way. You don't even have to remember the prayer of contrition, a sincere one that comes from the heart is all Jesus requires.

The following thoughts might help you in your preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They are based on the 10 Commandments found in the Book of Exodus, Chapter 20.

+ How is my relationship with Jesus? Is it growing? Does how I live proclaim Him to be my Lord and Saviour?

+ Have I placed anything before the importance of God in my life? Does He have first place in my thoughts, my time, how I spend money?

+ Have I spoken about God with love and reverence? Have I used coarse language in any way? Have I used my tongue to praise God?

+ How have I kept Sunday special? Have I dedicated time to God on Sunday? Have I prevented others from keeping Sunday special and restful?

+ How are my family relationships? How much time have I spent with them? Does someone need my help? Is there someone I need to forgive?

+ Have I welcomed life? Have I protected and nurtured it? Am I open to the gift of new family members?

+ Have I spent time building up the relationship with my spouse? Have I encouraged married people to be faithful to each other by my words and deeds?

+ Have I misused God's gifts? Have I taken advantage of anyone or of their possessions?

+ Have I retold stories of others without checking the facts? Have I believed ill of someone without giving them a chance to explain?

+ Have I sought purity in my relationships with others? Have I shunned things which encourage me to look at others as objects of pleasure rather than as persons?

+ Am I content and thankful for all that God has given me eg. physically, spiritually, materially?

When was the last time you met Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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