



The Sacrament of Confession



Micah

Hi everyone, it's Micah again. Up to now we talked about the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

The next sacrament we want to talk about is the sacrament of Confession. When we confess, we are given the gift of forgiveness of our sins. This special gift from God is given to us only through this sacrament.



Through confession, we are made worthy of receiving the Eucharist and of having our Lord Jesus Christ dwell in us.

Without confession, we are not worthy of this gift. Saint Paul writes, *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup"* (1 Corinthians 11:28).

In other words each one of us, before we can take the Holy Eucharist, must first examine ourselves to see if we are pure enough to take inside of us the most holy Lord Jesus Christ.

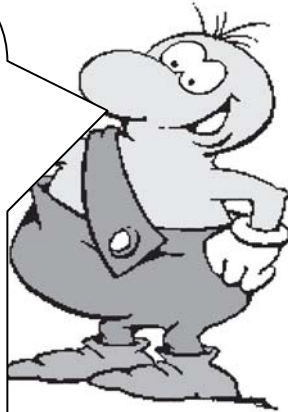


However, before you go to Abouna and confess you must first sit with yourself and think about the sins you committed.

A sin is when we disobey God's commandments. When we sin we say to God, 'I don't care about You.'

Sin keeps us away from God. It separates us from the One we love and that is why it is so bad.

When we think about what we did to hurt our Lord, we repent and promise not to do it again.



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Some people are afraid or embarrassed to tell their thoughts and actions to their father in confession. But sin will always remain as long as you keep it in your heart without talking to Abouna about it.

When you reveal all your thoughts to the priest, you help to get rid of them.

The wise Solomon says, *"For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up"* (Ecclesiastes 4:10). Abouna will help lift us up when we fall into sin.

St. John Cassian said, ***"The one who admits his thoughts can not be deceived."*** He also said, ***"Sin will stay as long as it is hidden in the heart."***



Saint Macarius the Great once met the devil and asked him how he was coping with the monks in the desert.

The devil answered, 'very bad. Every evil thought I tell them they admit to their priests, except one monk who is my friend because he never confesses his thoughts to the priest.'

Saint Macarius went straight to advise the monk to confess all his thoughts to a priest. The monk obeyed.

Later St. Macarius met the devil and asked, 'How well are you doing?' The devil answered, 'very bad, even that friend of mine is no longer my friend, he is now my enemy.'

Once you confessed your sin in front of Abouna, a miracle happens and the sin is wiped clean. It's like taking a big eraser and removing your sin from before the Lord God.

Abouna prays the absolution over you, granting you forgiveness of the sins you told him of. Then you become white like the snow and pure as you were when you were baptized. Such is the power of confession!

Confession is not only talking to Abouna, nor is it only feeling guilty because of your bad deeds. It is the forgiveness of your sins, through the work of the Holy Spirit in this sacrament. God will no longer remember your sin and will accept you when you take His holy Body and Blood in the Eucharist.





Remember that there are three steps to confession:

1. *Between me and myself*

I must be convinced that I need to repent. It's not a matter of confessing because "we have to" but because we ***need to***.

The Prodigal Son, when he was forced to feed the pigs and was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food he gave them, remembered his father's house. He understood his mistake by leaving his father and going to a far away place and said, 'I will go to my father and tell him I have sinned against heaven and before you and I'm not worthy to be called your son.'

It was sin that separated the Prodigal Son from his father. It is sin that separates us from our Father in heaven. We need to first understand how bad our actions were and humbly pray to our Father asking Him to forgive us and to help us and confess to Abouna.

Remember as the father accepted his Prodigal Son, so will our heavenly Father always accept us when we repent and go to Him.

2. *Between me and my father of confession*

We must speak out. Abouna is there to listen and to give advice and encouragement and to monitor our progress in repentance. Try to forget that it's Abouna you are sitting next to and speak to him as if you are talking to God.

Confess all kinds of sins (sins of deed, of thought, of feelings, of actions).

Be honest in your confession and remember you are really confessing to God through the Abouna.



3. *Between me and God*

After you have confessed and been forgiven, remember our Lord Jesus Christ's words to the sinful woman, "*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more*" (John 8:11).

God will not condemn us because of our sin, but we must try not to commit the sin again. But God knows that we have a weak nature and so if we sin again, we still have this wonderful sacrament so that God will forgive us again.

It doesn't matter how often we repent and go to confession. Each time we go God will forgive us – that is His promise. Remember that this promise had a very high price. It is because our Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross that we are given redemption of our sins.