

Introduction

YOU ARE MADE AND LOVED BY GOD. The most important things to remember throughout your entire life are that God loves you more than you know and that he wants you to be happy with him in heaven.

God knows that the only way for you to be happy throughout your life is by following his rules so you can eventually be with him forever in heaven. Like a good Father, even though he gives you rules to follow, he does not force you to follow them, because he wants you to learn how to make good choices on your own.

God made every person in this world, including you, with the ability to choose between right and wrong. Good choices help us to live our lives well. Bad choices are called sins. Every person struggles with sin. Sins are things we choose to do, not mistakes that happen by accident. Sin hurts us and others and pushes us away from God. God loves you so much. He never wants you to be hurting or far away from him, and knowing that we would sin, he had a plan from the beginning for our salvation.

God the Father sent his Son, Jesus, to live a human life, to die on the Cross, and to rise from the dead in order to save us from our sins. Forty days after his Resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven. He did this in order to save us! God wants us to be happy with him forever.



The path to heaven can be hard. Sometimes we sin even though we know it is wrong. God knew we would struggle with sin. He gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation to heal our souls from sin as often as we need.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a gift given to us by Jesus himself. In Matthew 18:18, Jesus says to his Apostles, “Truly, 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.” Jesus gave his Apostles the power to forgive sins. Priests today have the power to forgive sins through apostolic succession and the power of Jesus Christ.

When you go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you may be worried about telling your sins to the priest. After all, these are the things you are most ashamed of! But don’t worry. Priests are bound by the seal of Confession, which means they must keep anything they hear in Confession a secret—even if they’re threatened with death! You do not have to fear going to Confession—the Sacrament of Reconciliation is there to heal you so you can be free to live your best life, the one Jesus calls you to live.



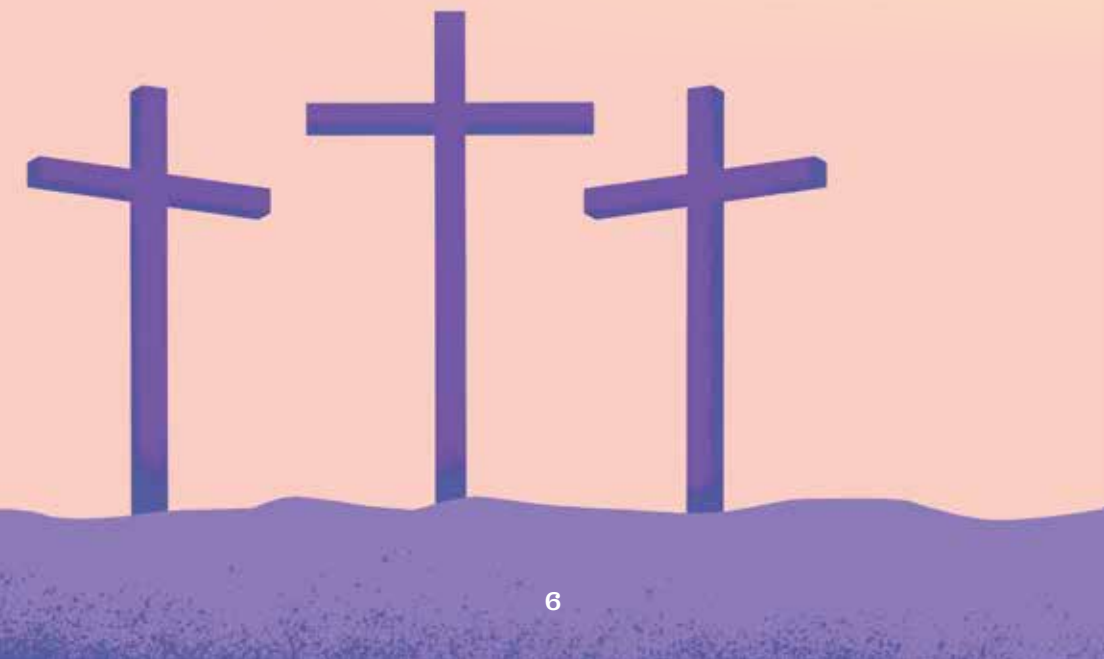
The Sacrament of Reconciliation heals us. Just like your body needs help to heal, so does your soul. Some sins are like spiritual scrapes and bruises. We call these spiritual bumps and bruises *venial sins*. Did you know that when you bless yourself with holy water or ask God's forgiveness at Mass, your soul can be healed from venial sins?





Other sins are more serious. These sins are called *mortal sins*. They are more than just bumps and bruises on our souls. They are like big spiritual injuries. Just as your body needs special help from a doctor for a bad injury, like a broken bone, your soul needs special help from a priest when you commit a mortal sin. The Sacrament of Reconciliation heals us from serious injuries to our souls. It also helps reconcile us to God, restoring sanctifying grace that is lost due to mortal sin.

It is true that venial sins and mortal sins hurt us. But the great news is that God loves to forgive and heal us. Jesus' sacrifice to save you defeated sin first. Every time you go to Confession, Jesus defeats sin again! Every time you go to Confession, you get closer to



God. The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us stay on the path toward heaven. It is one of God's best gifts. This book will help you go to Confession and become the holy saint God wants you to be.