

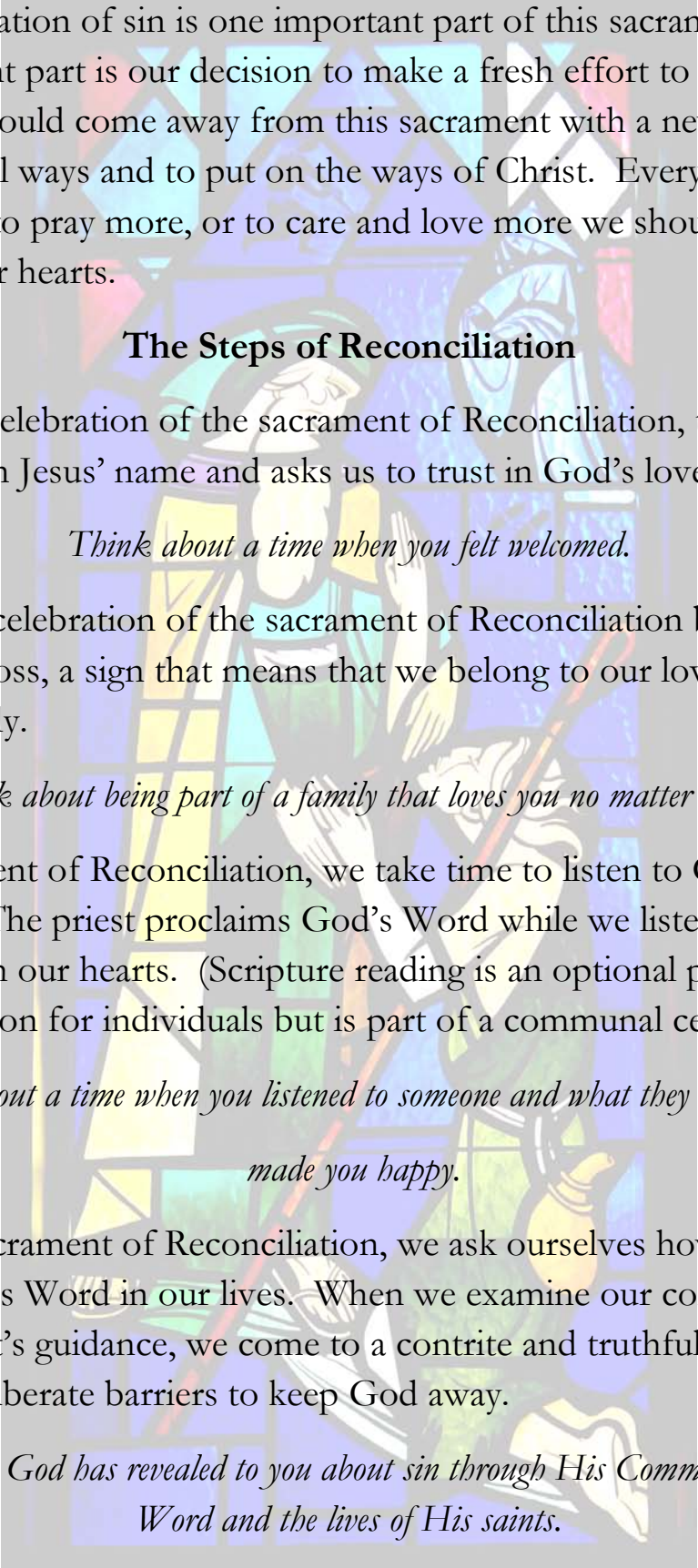
# Rconciliation. The Sacrament of Healing



**F**orgiveness is the central theme of Christian theology. We believe that personal sin breaks the bond between God and oneself and that through Jesus' pouring out His blood, God forgives sin. Matthew 26:28

Guilt is one of the most common and painful of feelings. We often feel remorse over mistakes and fear making future mistakes. Guilt may be appropriate or inappropriate. It is appropriate when your conscience tells you that you have done something wrong and need to correct the situation or make amends. It is inappropriate when you have done nothing wrong but blame yourself.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, to bring together again, is a time when we come aside to reflect, with the help of the Holy Spirit on the relationship with God, others and self. Jesus tells us that it is summed up in the Great Commandment of love. The sacrament of Reconciliation is an opportunity for us to reflect on our lives in the context of the Great Commandment.



Identification of sin is one important part of this sacrament. The most important part is our decision to make a fresh effort to love God, and others. We should come away from this sacrament with a new desire to put aside sinful ways and to put on the ways of Christ. Every time we have a fresh desire to pray more, or to care and love more we should know God is touching our hearts.

### **The Steps of Reconciliation**

To begin the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest welcomes us in Jesus' name and asks us to trust in God's love.

*Think about a time when you felt welcomed.*

We begin the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation by making the Sign of the Cross, a sign that means that we belong to our loving Father's Christian family.

*Think about being part of a family that loves you no matter what.*

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we take time to listen to God's Word in the Bible. The priest proclaims God's Word while we listen carefully and let it touch our hearts. (Scripture reading is an optional part of the Rite of Reconciliation for individuals but is part of a communal celebration.)

*Think about a time when you listened to someone and what they had to say  
made you happy.*

During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask ourselves how we have followed God's Word in our lives. When we examine our conscience with the Holy Spirit's guidance, we come to a contrite and truthful realization of our sins as deliberate barriers to keep God away.

*Think of what God has revealed to you about sin through His Commandments, His  
Word and the lives of His saints.*

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we express our sorrow and look for a way to show that we are sorry for doing wrong and that we want to change our lives.

*Think of a time when you were out of charity with a friend or family member. Think of the sorrow and loneliness you felt at the estrangement. Think of how you tried to make amends.*

At the end of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, together with the priest, we express our thanks to the Lord for the gift of His pardon and peace.

*Think of how you felt when you became reconciled with that person and reaffirmed your love and care for each other.*

### **A Basic Guideline for Examination of Conscience**

*Do I allow God's will to be the basis of all my decisions?*

*Do I pray on a regular basis? Do I thank God for His gifts?*

*Do I go to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?*

*Do I speak of God reverently and with respect? Do I defend Him and His name from abuse in my presence?*

*Do I take care of my mental, spiritual and physical needs in a way that shows thankfulness for my life? Do I defend this right for others?*

*Do I speak truthfully and act justly and compassionately? Am I a peacemaker?*

*Do I respect the work and the property of others? Do I respect their authority and rights?*

*Do I examine my thoughts and actions on a regular basis and avail myself of God's Sacramental gifts?*

**St. Joseph Church offers the Sacrament of Penance every Saturday from 3:30 pm to 4:15 pm in the Church. Penance Services are also available during the liturgical year during Lent and Advent.**