

LESSON SEVENTEENTH: ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

187. Q. What is the Sacrament of Penance?

A. Penance is a Sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

188. Q. How does the Sacrament of Penance remit sin, and restore to the soul the friendship of God?

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits sins and restores the friendship of God to the soul by means of the absolution of the priest.

189. Q. How do you know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism?

A. I know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism, because Jesus Christ granted that power to the priests of His Church when He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."⁴⁴

190. Q. How do the priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins?

A. The priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins by hearing the confession of sins, and granting pardon for them as ministers of God and in His name.

191. Q. What must we do to receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily?

A. To receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily we must do five things:

- We must examine our conscience.
- We must have sorrow for our sins.
- We must make a firm resolution never more to offend God.
- We must confess our sins to the priest.
- We must accept the penance which the priest gives us.

192. Q. What is the examination of conscience?

A. The examination of conscience is an earnest effort to recall to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

193. Q. How can we make a good examination of conscience?

A. We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to memory the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, the seven capital sins, and the particular duties of our state in life, to find out the sins we have committed.

194. Q. What should we do before beginning the examination of conscience?

A. Before beginning the examination of conscience we should pray to God to give us light to know our sins and grace to detest them. 45

LESSON EIGHTEENTH: ON CONTRITION

195. Q. What is Contrition, or sorrow for sin?

A. Contrition, or sorrow for sin, is a hatred of sin and a true grief of the soul for having offended God, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

196. Q. What kind of sorrow should we have for our sins?

A. The sorrow we should have for our sins should be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign.

197. Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be interior?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be interior, I mean that it should come from the heart, and not merely from the lips.

198. Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be supernatural?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be supernatural, I mean that it should be prompted by the grace of God, and excited by motives which spring from faith, and not by merely natural motives.

199. Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be universal?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be universal, I mean that we should be sorry for all our mortal sins without exception.

200. Q. What do you mean when you say that our sorrow should be sovereign?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be sovereign, I mean that we should grieve more for having offended God than for any other evil that can befall us. 46

201. Q. Why should we be sorry for our sins?

A. We should be sorry for our sins, because sin is the greatest of evils and an offense against God our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and because it shuts us out of heaven and condemns us to the eternal pains of hell.

202. Q. How many kinds of contrition are there?

A. There are two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition.

203. Q. What is perfect contrition?

A. Perfect contrition is that which fills us with sorrow and hatred for sin, because it offends God, who is infinitely good in Himself and worthy of all love.

204. Q. What is imperfect contrition?

A. Imperfect contrition is that by which we hate what offends God, because by it we lose heaven and deserve hell; or because sin is so hateful in itself.

205. Q. Is imperfect contrition sufficient for a worthy confession?

A. Imperfect contrition is sufficient for a worthy confession, but we should endeavor to have perfect contrition.

206. Q. What do you mean by a firm purpose of sinning no more?

A. By a firm purpose of sinning no more I mean a fixed resolve not only to avoid all mortal sin, but also its near occasions.

207. Q. What do you mean by the near occasions of sin?

A. By the near occasions of sin I mean all the persons, places, and things that may easily lead us into sin. 47

LESSON NINETEENTH: ON CONFESSION

208. Q. What is Confession?

A. Confession is the telling of our sins to a duly authorized priest, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

209. Q. What sins are we bound to confess?

A. We are bound to confess all our mortal sins. but it is well also to confess our venial sins.

210. Q. Which are the chief qualities of a good Confession?

A. The chief qualities of a good Confession are three: it must be humble, sincere, and entire.

211. Q. When is our Confession humble?

A. Our Confession is humble, when we accuse our selves of our sins, with a deep sense of shame and sorrow for having offended God.

212. Q. When is our Confession sincere?

A. Our Confession is sincere, when we tell our sins honestly and truthfully, neither exaggerating nor excusing them.

213. Q. When is our Confession entire?

A. Our Confession is entire, when we tell the number and kinds of our sins and the circumstances which change their nature.

214. Q. What should we do if we cannot remember the number of our sins?

A. If we cannot remember the number of our sins, we should tell the number as nearly as possible, and say how often we may have sinned in a day, a week, or a month, and how long the habit or practice has lasted. 48

215. Q. Is our Confession worthy if, without our fault, we forget to confess a mortal sin?

A. If without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin, our Confession is worthy, and the sin is forgiven; but it must be told in Confession if it again comes to our mind.

216. Q. Is it a grievous offense willfully to conceal a mortal sin in Confession?

A. It is a grievous offense willfully to conceal a mortal sin in Confession, because we thereby tell a lie to the Holy Ghost, and make our Confession worthless.

217. Q. What must he do who has willfully concealed a mortal sin in Confession?

A. He who has willfully concealed a mortal sin in Confession must not only confess it, but must also repeat all the sins he has committed since his last worthy Confession.

218. Q. Why does the priest give us a penance after Confession?

A. The priest gives us a penance after Confession, that we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins.

219. Q. Does not the Sacrament of Penance remit all punishment due to sin?

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits the eternal punishment due to sin, but it does not always remit the temporal punishment which God requires as satisfaction for our sins.

220. Q. Why does God require a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin?

A. God requires a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin, to teach us the great evil of sin and to prevent us from falling again.

221. Q. Which are the chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin?

A. The chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin are: Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, all spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and the patient suffering of the ills of life. 49

222. Q. Which are the chief spiritual works of mercy?

A. The chief spiritual works of mercy are seven: To admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

223. Q. Which are the chief corporal works of mercy?

A. The chief corporal works of mercy are seven: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.

LESSON TWENTIETH: ON THE MANNER OF MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION

224. Q. What should we do on entering the confessional?

A. On entering the confessional we should kneel, make the sign of the Cross, and say to the priest, Bless me, Father; then add, I confess to Almighty God and to you, Father, that I have sinned.

225. Q. Which are the first things we should tell the priest in Confession?

A. The first things we should tell the priest in Confession are the time of our last Confession, and whether we said the penance and went to Holy Communion.

226. Q. After telling the time of our last Confession and Communion what should we do?

A. After telling the time of our last Confession and Communion we should confess all the mortal sins we have since committed, and all the venial sins we may wish to mention.

227. Q. What must we do when the confessor asks us questions?

A. When the confessor asks us questions we must answer them truthfully and clearly. 50

228. Q. What should we do after telling our sins?

A. After telling our sins we should listen with attention to the advice which the confessor may think proper to give.

229. Q. How should we end our Confession?

A. We should end our Confession by saying, I also accuse myself of all the sins of my past life, telling, if we choose, one or several of our past sins.

230. Q. What should we do while the priest is giving us absolution?

A. While the priest is giving us absolution we should from our heart renew the Act of Contrition.