

**TRUE & FALSE Saviors**

Redemption with Christ is Salvation!

- Christ is the true Savior 'who takes away the sins of the world' through **forgiveness**  
"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do..." - Luke 23:34
- Jesus offers a **total removal of sin through mercy**, the uplifting movement to God & heaven
- Jesus goes *deep into the wound of sin to uproot it all* (see roots & wounds on opposite side)

Redemption without Christ is Insanity!

- Satan is a false savior 'who takes away the sins of the world' through **violence**  
"If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then, will his kingdom stand?" - Matthew 12:26
- Satan offers a **partial replacement of sin through violence**, the downward spiral to death & hell:  
"When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my home from which I came.' But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean, and put in order. Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there; and the last condition of that person is worse than the first." - Matthew 12:43-45
- Satan casts himself out by inviting in another vice to take his place

**CONFESSION: The Encounter with Mercy**

- **Mercy** is the shape of God's love towards sinners - God has always already chosen to forgive you
- **Reconciliation** happens not when God chooses to forgive, but when you choose to be forgiven
- Knocking on heaven's door: "*Lord, I need Your Son's Mercy!*" or "*Lord, I'm a good enough person*"  
"Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners" - Luke 5:32
- All sin ruptures our **Communion with God**, so it is God alone who can forgive sins
- Sin also breaks **Communion with the Church**, so God tells priests to mediate His Church's forgiveness

**CONFESSION: ARRR'ing our Brokenness**

- **Acknowledge** your sins & need for forgiveness with an *Examination of Conscience* (opposite side)
- **Relate** your sins ...
  - to God directly (for venial, less serious sins)
  - or through God's chosen priest-mediator (for mortal, serious sins)
- **Receive** His mercy...
  - with *Act of Contrition, Penitential Rite, Eucharist* for venial sins
  - in *Sacramental Confession* for mortal & serious sins
- **Respond** to His mercy with your *Penance* & with your transformed heart

**WHAT** do I confess?

- Confess **All serious** and **mortal** sins
  - Mortal sins are (1) serious, (2) committed with full knowledge of its seriousness, (3) freely chosen
  - Mortal sins destroy divine life in us. Venial Sins chip away at this divine life.
  - Some serious sins are not mortal because the person lacks full knowledge of its gravity, an inability to choose freely, habit or pathological disorders
- Any **venial** sins that you are intensely purifying
  - Venial sins are less serious sins. They are your everyday faults and failings.
  - You should be confessing your everyday sins to God...everyday! Confession should not be a rapid-fire list of all these venial infractions you committed...does that really *help* you to grow?
  - Tell the priest the ones that you need most help with, but take ALL of them daily to God.

**HOW OFTEN** should I confess?

- All Catholics are obligated to confess *serious sins* at least once a year
- A good start is to go during Advent and Lent
- Confessions throughout the year can be good check-ins with the Church about the state of your soul, offer you good counsel, and encourage you to keep progressing in holiness!

### HOW LONG should confession take?

- Whether your last confession was last week or 50 years ago, confession should take about 5 minutes. Sometimes the priest can spend more time with you, sometimes less - it really depends on the number of people and the time he can give.
- Enter confession knowing your serious & habitual sins, confess them in a straightforward manner, listen to counsel from the priest, receive absolution, and do your penance within a reasonable time

### PREPARE for Confession:

- **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.** Become aware of all serious sins you have committed, and what venial sins are weighing heavily on your heart that you would really like to work on changing. Let the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, 7 Deadly Sins, the Scriptures, and your conscience guide you.
  - **ROOTS.** While it's important not to dwell on sin, it is important to find the roots of that sin. Confession provides an opportunity not only to trim the leaves off the weed, but to uproot it entirely. Ask in prayer: "When did this sin first enter my life? What strong inclinations surround this sin? Do any persons or situations in my life compound my struggle with this sin? Share the ROOTS of your sinfulness with the priest (this is not reliving the details, but unearthing the underlying causes of sin: fear, loneliness, despair, hatred, guilt, shame, selfishness, arrogance, etc.). Search your past with Christ.
  - **WOUNDS.** Sin causes deep wounds. When we sin, we wound our relationships (with self, others, and God). When others sin against us, they wound us. Left untreated, these wounds bleed out. Some of them require a bandaid, but others require deep surgery from our Divine Healer. How have you been wounded by sin (your own or others)? This question is difficult to answer because we prefer hiding our wounds from others, from God, and even from ourselves: "Oh, I'll be fine" may be what we say, but it is necessary to give all wounds to Jesus. **ARRR** prayer can help you acknowledge and relate these wounds, so as to receive his healing and respond with grateful love.

### CONFESSING your sins

- **CLARIFY** the wounds and roots of your sins as best you are able. This is different than reliving the gory details of the sin. Sin is garbage. Don't relive its story with the garbageman: just toss it!
- **FURTHER HELP.** Let the priest know if you need further conversation, direction, or counseling, and he may recommend meeting with you or directing you to someone who can help. If
- **SACRAMENTAL GRACE.** Confession doesn't solve all the problems that are due to sin. It does remove guilt & provide the sacramental grace to deal with the aftermath of those sins.

### AFTER CONFESSION

- **PENANCE.** It's not punishment, but an act to patch up wounds and move us to deeper conversion.
- **BUILD** new habits based on your prayer and the priest's counsel to move you from sin to salvation.
- **FORGIVE YOURSELF.** You put yourself above God if you call yourself dirty when he calls you clean.
- **FORGIVE TRESPASSERS.** Forgiveness is a process for us. Continue daily to forgive your wrongdoers.
- **EUCHARIST.** Receive the Eucharist with new love, new fervor. You are reconciled to Christ & Church!
- **SHARE** your experience of the Sacrament of Confession. Like sharing your experience of Mass, you share the Holy Spirit's grace you have received. Obviously, you do not share your sins, but the gift of mercy and how it has impacted you.

### NEXT STEPS

Let the Lenten mission prepare you for a new beginning come Easter. Now you are equipped to pray, worship, and confess with new energy, so...

- ...continue sharing your thoughts, feelings, and desires with God in **Prayer** using ARRR.
- ...continue good preparation & unpacking of **Mass** every week.
- ...continue examining the roots and wounds of your sins, and **confess** them.