

# FAMILY FAITH

## Chapter 12: God's Mercy and Forgiveness

*Jesus forgives and heals us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*

### Chapter Summary

Jesus, as God, has the authority to forgive sins. The authority to forgive sins in Jesus' name was given to the Apostles and their successors the evening that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus invites us to be reconciled again through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When preparing for Reconciliation, we should pray to the Holy Spirit as we examine our consciences. This sacrament is also called Penance. Through our penance, we turn our hearts back to God and "make amends for the sin" by doing penance (CCC 1459). Through this sacrament, we are forgiven and our wounded souls are healed; grace and the theological virtues are restored in us.

### More for Parents

Children learn how to forgive by watching others, especially their parents. Forgiveness is difficult. Asking for forgiveness is difficult as well. Parents have many opportunities to show God's merciful love to their children, but do we ever give our children the opportunity to practice mercy and forgiveness? Parents can help their children grow in appreciation for the mercy of God by apologizing and asking for forgiveness from one another and, when necessary, from their children. A family that practices God's merciful love will be one who remains close to God's healing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### Virtue in the Family

Sin is contrary to God's plan for each of us. Mortal sin destroys God's grace in our souls and severs our relationship with Him. Venial sin weakens God's grace in our souls. Without God's grace, we do not have what we need to live virtuous and holy lives.

### Being Sorrowful for Our Sins

- When your children make a sinful choice, help them realize that the sorrow they feel should not be simply out of fear of being punished. Rather, it should be sorrow for the damage this sin causes them and how it offends God. The sorrow can be a way to lead them to ask for forgiveness.
- Family prayer activity:
  - Spend some time in silence together and think of times when you may have disobeyed God or one of His laws.
  - Think of how this sin hurt your soul, how it hurt your relationship with others, and, most importantly, how it hurt your relationship with God.
  - Pray for God to help you be sorrowful for your sins so that you can make a firm commitment to not sin again.
  - Conclude by praying the Act of Contrition together. See page 292 of the Student Text for the words.

### Vocabulary Words for Your Children to Review

- **contrition**
- **penance**
- **Reconciliation**
- **repentance**

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