

## DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

33

From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 306 – 312

### Why can venial sins also be the object of sacramental confession?

The Confession of venial sins is strongly recommended by the Church, even if this is not strictly necessary, because it helps us to form a correct conscience and to fight against evil tendencies. It allows us to be healed by Christ and to progress in the life of the Spirit.



### Who is the minister of this sacrament?

Christ has entrusted the ministry of Reconciliation to his apostles, to the bishops who are their successors and to the priests who are the collaborators of the bishops, all of whom become thereby instruments of the mercy and justice of God. They exercise their power of forgiving sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

### To whom is the absolution of some sins reserved?

The absolution of certain particularly grave sins is reserved to the Apostolic See or to the local bishop or to priests who are authorised by them. Any priest, however, can absolve a person *who is in danger of death* from any sin and excommunication.

### Is a confessor bound to secrecy?

Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to people, every confessor, without any exception and under very severe penalties, is bound to maintain “the sacramental seal” which means absolute secrecy about the sins revealed to him in confession.

### What are the effects of this sacrament?

The effects of the sacrament of Penance are: reconciliation with God and therefore the forgiveness of sins; reconciliation with the Church; recovery, if it has been lost, of the state of grace; remission of the eternal punishment merited by mortal sins, and remission, at least in part, of the temporal punishment which is the consequence of sin; peace, serenity of conscience and spiritual consolation; and an increase of spiritual strength for the struggle of Christian living.

## Can this sacrament be celebrated in some cases with a general confession and general absolution?



In cases of serious necessity (as in imminent danger of death) recourse may be had to a communal celebration of Reconciliation with general confession and general absolution, as long as the norms of the Church are observed and there is the intention of individually confessing one's grave sins in due time.

### What are indulgences?

After sins are forgiven in Confession, there sometimes remains the damage which those sins have caused. In Justice, this damage must be paid for and this is done through "temporal punishment" which will happen in purgatory if not in this life. Penance additional to that given by the priest in the confessional is a way of paying this debt in this life. This penance includes fasting, giving alms, offering one's suffering in love... A person may be moved to want to avoid such punishment for themselves or for a soul in purgatory. Obtaining an Indulgence is one way of doing this. An Indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favour of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins. This is done by the penitent's prayer in the goodwill of the Indulgence offered by the Church. The Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance and charity (CCC1478).

*It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact [deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk)*