Jesus feeds us with his own Body, the Eucharist, at Mass, but sin is like a parasite, robbing us of the nourishment which makes us strong. The Sacrament of Reconciliation not only washes us clean of past sins, but restores our strength to do better next time.

Has it been a long time since your last confession? Priests will tell you there is great joy in helping lost Catholics return to the heart of our Father through confession. After all, priests offer their entire lives to bring us closer to God through the sacraments!

But confession makes me **uncomfortable!** So does the dentist. Still going? As you speak to the priest, remember the peace and help of the Holy Spirit is with you. Celebrate as a family to help your children form habits which will benefit them their whole life.

Remember, if you bring your contrition, the priest will be so happy to help you with the rest.

3

Gospel of Luke Read the rest Luke 15:11-32

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So the father divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

"When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. The young man would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

"But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

"So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

The first act of the Sacrament of Reconciliation happens before I am anywhere near the confessional.



In the quiet of my heart, I ask: What have I put in the place which belongs only to God? Am I moving towards God or away from him?

Reconciliation begins with return, a return to the heart of the Father.

In the Father's heart, we can see things for what they are. Do I find joy in God's blessings or abuse his gifts for disordered pleasure which harms and cannot last?

Reconciliation begins with **CONTRITION**; sincere sorrow for the sin which has harmed me and others. Because I am part of the One Body, my sin injures the Church and the good she offers to the whole world.

When I have sorrow, I have hope, because my Father is running to embrace me before I have even arrived.

## What is Jesus telling me?

A young man has insulted his

family and squandered his inheritance in the worst way. He has hit muck bottom, a starving slave tending to pigs, the most despicable animal prohibited to Jews.

He has has sinned against his father, his family, his faith and community in the worst way. His situation could easily have been considered hopeless, his exile permanent.

So how does this amazing reconciliation take place? Jesus says the young man "came to himself". He considered just where he was, and recognized he needed to be somewhere else!

Like our heavenly Father, this father is full of joy when his child chooses to turn back. Not even waiting for the son to arrive, he runs outside to embrace him and, hearing his son's confession, immediately restores him as family.

Am I on the road to my Father right now or heading for a hungry, filthy home with the pigs?

If I need to change direction, do I need to do this on my own?

## Prayer before Reconciliation

Come, Holy Spirit, into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess, and grant me the grace to confess them fully, humbly, and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again.

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, mirror of innocence and sanctity and refuge of penitent sinners, intercede for me that I may obtain the grace to make a good confession.

All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a sinner, that I may repent from my sinful ways and that I may be forever united with you. Amen.



## Feelings of Consolation

Faith Hope Love

joy peace

balance

connection

other-centred

energized

inspired

patient

kind

good

generous

gentle

modest

self-controlled

chaste

Happy is not joy, and depression is not desolation. See link to '**7 D's**' on website.



- 1. Draw pictures of 3 different things you do every day, week or month.
- 2. How does each activity make you feel? Feelings may help us understand if we are drawing nearer to God or away from him.
- 3. Draw an arrow from each circle towards or away from Jesus.

## Feelings of Desolation

Doubt

Fear Anger

isolation

gloom

focused inward on self

no energy

growing downward spiral of

negative feelings

can't look forward

giving up on things which were previously important

Spend 5 minutes How do I go to Confession? Or Sacraments

101 - Penance (why we confess)

Visit our Nelson Diocese website for these videos or a Guide to Reconciliation.