

## **CONFESSION - THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

Confession, the Sacrament of Holy Confession, has always been an integral part of preparing for Holy Communion in the Orthodox Christian Church. What is Confession basically? A public acknowledgment of one's sinfulness and need of forgiveness. A tangible sign of God's forgiveness in His Son, Jesus Christ. A reconciliation of man to God through forgiveness of sins that separate man from God. A sincere effort to examine our life, goals, values, priorities, and characteristics. Sincere prayer, asking God for His forgiveness and thanking Him for all the things He has given us, accompanied by a firm desire to live a renewed and changed Christian life. It can be tremendously uplifting and is a real foundation for spiritual growth and renewal (See Jn. 20:21-23, James 5:16).

Many ask: What shall I say in Confession? Confession is the most neglected Sacrament, simply because many do not understand it. Each of us is tempted to commit sins - to displease God and violate His commandments. What types of sins are there?

**SINS AGAINST GOD:** If I lose confidence, trust or hope in God. If I blaspheme, curse Him, mock Him, poke fun at Him. If I absent myself from the Divine Liturgy on Sunday without good reason. If I do not receive Holy Communion periodically.

**SINS AGAINST MY FELLOW MAN:** If I am jealous, envious, hateful, malicious, slanderous, vindictive, revengeful, or mean. If I criticize unjustly, ridicule, poke fun, take advantage of, insult, hurt, inflict harm, or gossip in any way.

**SINS AGAINST MYSELF:** If I lie, cheat, steal, or deceive. If I am unethical in my practices at home, school, or work. If I have impure thoughts in my mind. Acts of fornication and adultery. Pornography. Profanity. Pride and conceit.

Confession is not meant to humiliate nor shame a person, but to help him come closer to God. Sin keeps us away from Him.

Whatever is said in Confession remains there. The Priest nor the confessee repeat anything. Sins are parted with at the Foot of the Cross. The prayer of Absolution is recited and the burden of sin is lifted.

Express the sins which are suppressed in your heart and soul. Confess your sins and prepare yourself for Holy Communion, for prayer and for spiritual renewal and happiness.