

## Going to Confession

The death of a significant person in life naturally stirs up powerful memories. Grief is strong because love was deep. Loss feels frightening because presence brought comfort.

You will remember some events that make you smile and others that fill you with remorse. You will recall times of love and times of anger—with the same person.

Perhaps you have some regrets. There were some words you never said, some actions you never performed. Perhaps you wanted a better relationship that always seemed just beyond your reach.

The death of a significant person helps each of us reevaluate who we are, whom we love, how we act, and what we believe.

If this is a time that you would like to express sorrow, the Catholic Church offers you a safe way to do it: going to confession.

Confession is a short prayer service between a Catholic and a Catholic priest. If it has been a while since you have been to confession, or even if you have never been, you may find that now is a good time for this experience.

In confession you tell the priest what you are sorry for. You may be sorry for things that you said and did. You may be sorry for things you did not say and did not do. The priest is required to hold in confidence everything that you say.

After you confess your sins the priest will give you absolution. Through the ministry of the church, the priest prays that God will give you pardon and peace.

Pardon and peace.

He will minister to you, giving you a way to say that you're sorry, and a way to hear that you have been forgiven.

The regular times for confession are posted on your parish website, in the bulletin, or on a sign outside the church. Or you may call the parish office for information. When you go to see the priest, you may confess anonymously or face-to-face.

You may also arrange a time to visit with the priest in person. Contact him and ask when it may be convenient. The appointment will give you a target date to complete your reflection, as well as a more leisurely atmosphere in which a priest can help you explore your thoughts.

If you are a non-Catholic Christian, you may go to a priest for confession if you do not have recourse to a minister of your own church or ecclesial community, if you ask on your own initiative, and if you believe what Catholics believe about confession. If the diocesan bishop has established specific norms in a case like yours, the priest will follow them.

In this time of grief, you will find many thoughts rising up, some that may surprise you. You may be coming to a greater understanding of the main themes of your life.

By making a confession now, you may transition from the past to the future with a sense of joy, hope, and forgiveness.