



Confession

When we go to a priest, we can let him be our guide. It's customary to let him know how long it is since our last confession and any particular things about the circumstances of our life which may be helpful for him to know. When we confess our sins there's no "right" or "wrong" way of doing so, it's entirely up to the individual, for what's important isn't what we say but what Christ says.

Forgiveness

The priest, after giving a penance, speaks Christ's words of forgiveness. People often question why we need to go to another human being to receive forgiveness and not go to God directly. The fact is that we are flesh-and-blood human beings and God communicates with us through human beings – beginning with Jesus Christ and then down the centuries through his ministers and our community of believers, the Church. Through the priest, God allows us to hear that our sins are forgiven.

Sharing

God forgives us. But the sacrament is complete only when we return to our family and friends and share the forgiveness we have received. Too many of us are like the wicked steward in the gospel who was forgiven a fortune by his master and then bumped into a man who owed him only a few pence yet the steward insisted on repayment. The steward had totally failed to understand what had been given to

him. It made no difference at all in his life. And it is the same with us. God's love and forgiveness make all the difference to us. It makes it possible for us to start afresh in the confident knowledge that God loves us very much and enables us to start again by offering his forgiveness to others.

