

Catholic Caregivers

'Caregiving is pro-life!'

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Catholic Church teaches that sin is “before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with Him.” This sacrament repairs the damage and has three essential parts, confession of one’s sins, the forgiveness of those sins, and one’s reconciliation with God and the faith community.

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Because they feel they’ve committed unforgivable sins or are afraid they can’t remember everything they need to confess.

Because they don’t want to tell their sins “outside the box” where the priest can see them.

Because, with all the changes in the Church in the last 40 years, they aren’t sure how they’re supposed to go to confession now.

Because they can’t remember the Act of Contrition.

Your care-receiver may not even bring up the subject of going to confession but may appreciate it if you do. It’s good to remind him or her:

- If it’s been a long time since your loved one last celebrated this sacrament, then it’s a great time to do it again. The priest isn’t going to scold him or her.
- No sin is unforgivable. Nothing your care-receiver says is going to shock the priest.
- Your loved one doesn’t need to remember a complete list of all the wrong she has done or

worry about forgetting something. For example: “There were times I was angry when I shouldn’t have been” rather than “On this day, I got mad at this person. On that day, I got mad at that person” and so on.

- The priest, in Jesus’ name, offers forgiveness and peace. Offers God’s grace. It can be wonderful to receive that face-to-face.

- Your care-receiver doesn’t have to worry about how to go to confession. Again, the priest will be happy to gently lead him through it.

- An act of contrition can be as simple as “I’m sorry.” Your loved one doesn’t need to recite the exact prayer, word for word, she learned as a child.

In recent years this sacrament hasn’t been used much and that’s too bad.

Even if your care-receiver doesn’t want to celebrate reconciliation, consider going yourself. It’s a source of grace—of spiritual strength and blessing—that can make a tremendous difference in your life, especially at this time in your role as a caregiver.

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To read more about the Sacrament of Reconciliation visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ site which includes an online edition of the *Catechism*. Here is the link:

<http://old.usccb.org/catechism/text/pt2sect2chpt2.shtml#art4>

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