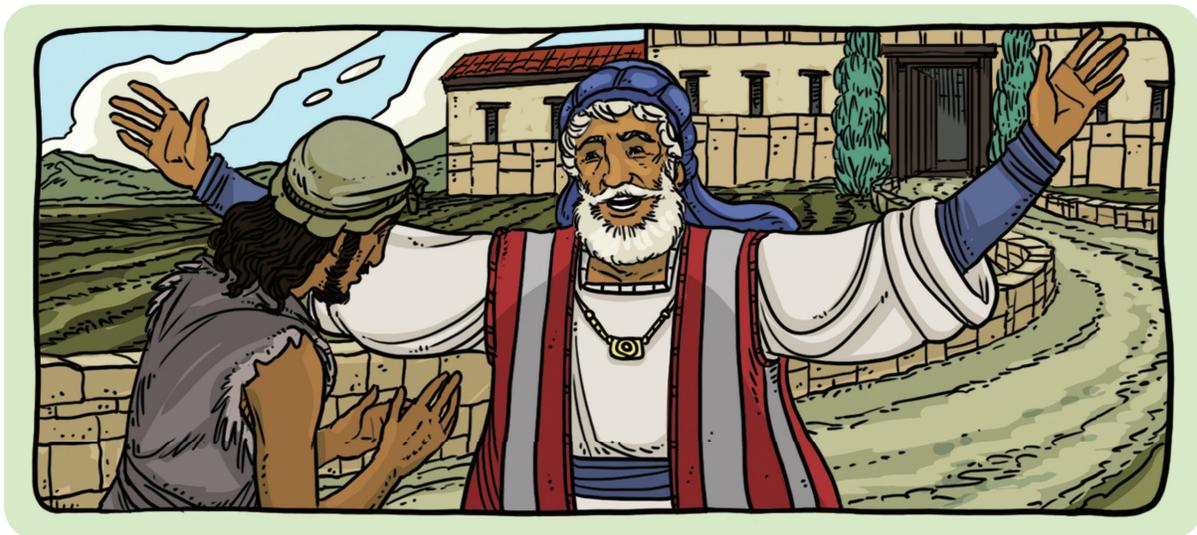


## God's Treasure of Forgiveness



### Prayer

Dear God,  
Be with me as I prepare for the Sacrament of  
Penance and Reconciliation. Help me to know your  
mercy and love. Help me to follow Jesus, your Son,  
who is your greatest gift to us. I ask this in his name.  
Amen.



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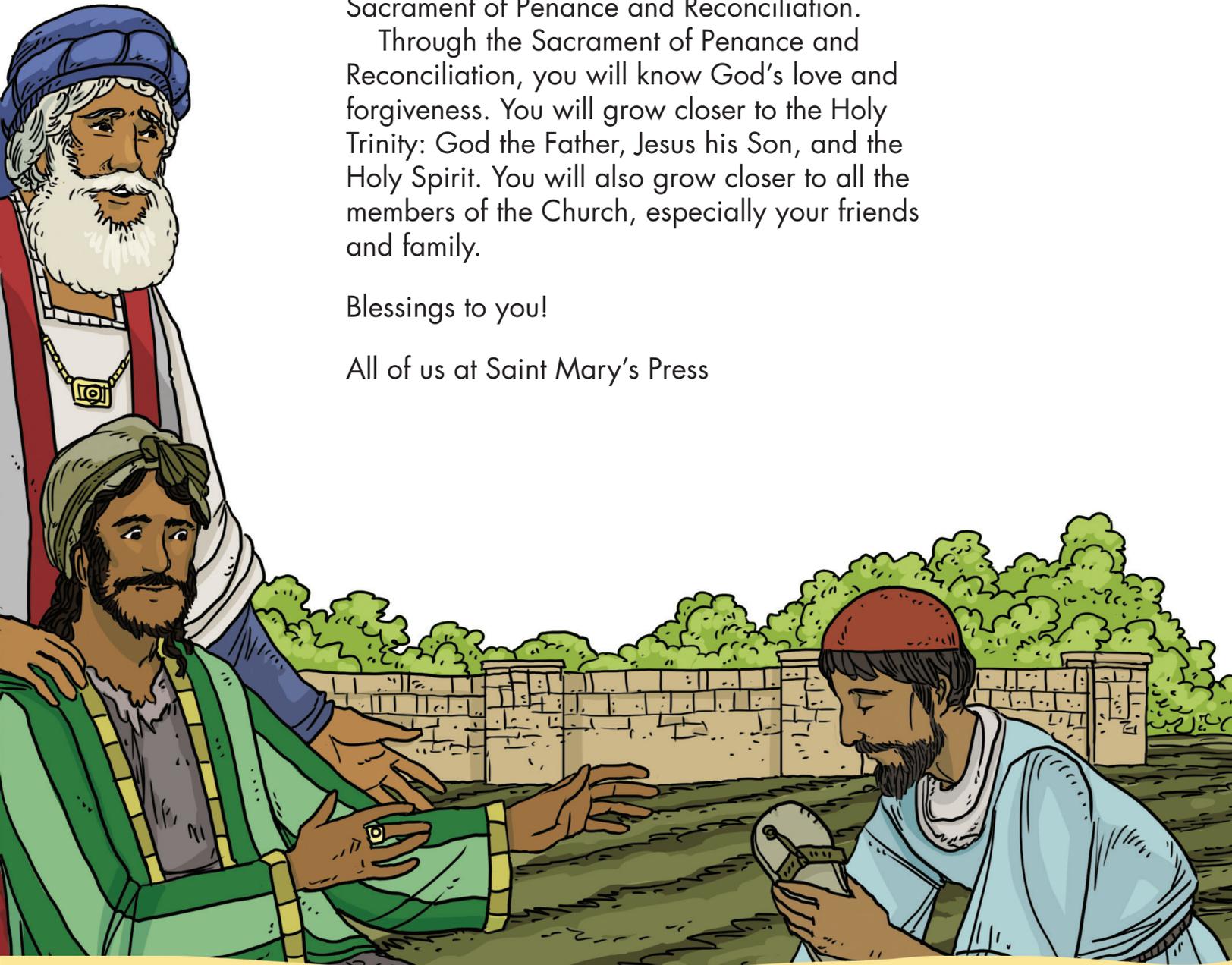
# Welcome

Welcome, children! You are about to start out on an adventure. You are about to discover God's treasure of the Sacraments. You will be seeking and finding two wonderful Sacraments that Jesus gave us: the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This booklet will explain the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, you will know God's love and forgiveness. You will grow closer to the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit. You will also grow closer to all the members of the Church, especially your friends and family.

Blessings to you!

All of us at Saint Mary's Press



# Chapter 1: Jesus Is Always with Us



## Introduction

Do you remember celebrating Christmas? You may remember that Christmas is the day that Jesus was born. God gave his Son, Jesus, to us to save us and to lead us back to him. When Jesus lived on the earth with us, people could hear what he said and see what he did through his words and actions. What a wonderful gift God the Father gave us!

Do you remember celebrating Easter? At Easter, we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead for us and lives with us forever. We no longer see Jesus as he walked on the earth, but he still gives his life to us. He gives his life to us now through the Sacraments. Through the Sacraments, Jesus is with us always.

## Scripture Story: Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

In this Scripture passage, we find out what happened when Jesus rose from the dead. He met his friend Mary. Let's read together:

Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked her.

She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"

Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. . . .

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

(John 20:11-14, 16)

Look at the title of the story. Do you know what "Risen Jesus" means? It means that Jesus was crucified on the cross but rose from the dead to live forever.

Who was Mary Magdalene? She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his tomb, or grave. She was crying because she did not know where Jesus was. But when Mary Magdalene turned around, she saw Jesus! Later Jesus would appear to his other followers.

This is the story of the very first Easter Sunday, when Jesus rose from the dead. Each year at Easter, we celebrate that the Risen Jesus is with us today. One special way he is with us is in the Seven Sacraments.

## Jesus Gave Us the Sacraments

Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love. These signs are called Sacraments. Jesus is present to us in a special way in the Sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. The Sacraments give us grace, the gift of God's life in us. Grace makes us God's children and helps us do good things. We can be sure that when we receive the Sacraments with faith, they will accomplish what they signify. That is, they will do in us what the words and actions of the Sacraments say they will do. They will help us to be faithful followers of Jesus.

Grace also helps us to stay away from sin. A sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.

The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church and are called the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Do you know the date of your Baptism? Ask your parents to tell you.

## God's Treasure of Forgiveness

In Baptism we become children of God and start a new life with God. All of our sins are washed away. If we sin after we are baptized, our new life with God is weakened—or even lost if it is a big sin. That is why we have the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, to forgive the sins we commit after we are baptized.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation has many names:

- Its official Church name is the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to "the Sacrament of Penance" or "the Sacrament of Reconciliation."
- We often call this Sacrament **confession**, because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, "We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon."
- Sometimes it is called the Sacrament of **conversion**, because this Sacrament helps us to *convert*, or change, for the better.

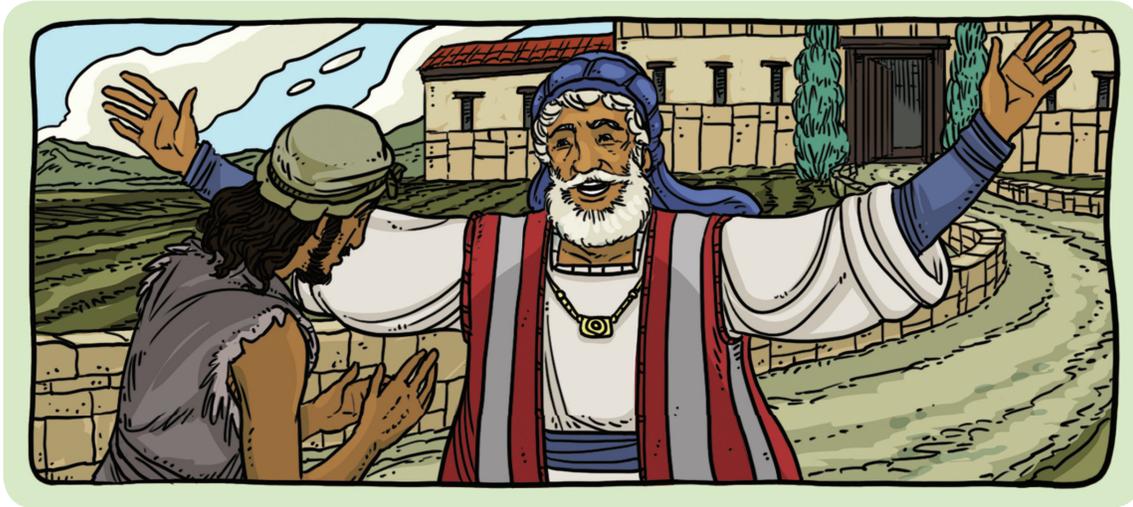
In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask God to forgive us. After we confess our sins and are forgiven, our new life with God will be strengthened if it had been weakened or restored if it had been lost.

## Things to Remember

- Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
- We meet Jesus in the Sacraments.
- The new life with God that we receive in Baptism is weakened by our sins or even lost if it is a big sin.
- We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

# Chapter 2:

## We Trust in God's Mercy



### Introduction

What choices do you make every day? Sometimes the choices are easy: Should I have chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Should I have an apple or a banana? Choices about our own actions are not always easy. Should I be mean or nice? Should I do what Mom or Dad asks, or not?

It does not matter if we have chocolate or vanilla ice cream. But it does matter if we are mean or nice and if we obey Mom or Dad. Sometimes we choose to do wrong. We sin. Sin is a choice to take the wrong path. But we can always come back. We can always make the next good choice.

### Scripture Story: The Forgiving Father

When Jesus walked on earth, he was well-known for telling stories, or parables. The Parable of the Forgiving Father is one of Jesus' most famous stories. It is about a son who ran away and came back. In this part of the parable, the son is on his

way home. He planned to tell his father how sorry he was that he had left home and wasted all his money. Let's see what happens next:

Jesus went on to say, . . . "[The sinful son] was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.'" (Luke 15:11, 20–24)

Look at the title of the story: "The Forgiving Father." In the beginning of this parable, the son wanted to leave. He wanted all of the money coming to him when his father died. He took the money and went far away. He spent all of it in very foolish ways!

Then when he had no money for food, he decided to go back home. He thought of his father's house, where everyone was cared for and well-fed. He decided to go back home. He said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you." The father could have been angry with his son, but he was not. The father was a forgiving father. The father was filled with love and mercy and called for a celebration!

Our Father in Heaven is like this father. God is a forgiving father. God will always love us, welcome us back, and forgive us when we are sorry. Jesus told this parable so that we would always trust in God's forgiveness.

## God's Forgiveness and Mercy

This parable teaches us about God's forgiveness. Many times in the Gospels, Jesus teaches us about the importance of forgiveness. We must ask the people we hurt by our sins for their forgiveness. We must also forgive other people when they make mistakes or hurt us. We must do this even when people are not sorry for what they have done.

It is important that we also ask for God's forgiveness. We hurt our friendship with God when we sin. The special Sacrament in which we ask for God's forgiveness is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We ask God for forgiveness through the priest, and our sins are forgiven. We become reconciled, or reconnected, with God and with the Church. Sometimes other people may not forgive us, but God will always forgive us if we are truly sorry.

## God's Treasure of Forgiveness

When we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we receive God's forgiveness.

At the very beginning of the Sacrament, the priest will greet us and welcome us. We then pray together the Sign of the Cross. Making the Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are baptized and that we belong to God. The priest will usually say

something like, "May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and to trust in his mercy" (*Rite of Penance*, number 42).

**Mercy** is the loving-kindness of God toward all of his children. When we go to confession, we trust in God's mercy, and we trust that if we are truly sorry for our sins, God will forgive us. When we confess our sins to the priest, he can never tell those sins to anyone else. He has made a promise never to tell what he hears in confession. This is called the seal of the confessional.

## Things to Remember

- God is a loving Father. He always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins.
- God's mercy and forgiveness come to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we confess our sins to the priest. He can never tell anyone else what he hears from us.

# Chapter 3:

## We Follow Jesus' Message of Love



### Introduction

What is the most important thing you will do today? Will you brush your teeth? Will you wash your hands before eating? Will you pick up your things and put them away? All of these tasks are important. But what do you think Jesus said was the most important thing to do in our lives? Let's listen to the Word of God and hear what Jesus said.

### Scripture Story: Love Is the Greatest Commandment

In this Scripture passage, we find out what Jesus thinks is the most important thing we could ever do. He answered a very important question. Let's read together:

A teacher of the Law . . . came to [Jesus] with a question: "Which commandment is the most important of all?"

Jesus replied, "The most important one is this: 'Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment more important than these two." (Mark 12:28-31)

When we say something is "the most important," we mean that it should be taken seriously. We will be learning about other commandments. We are not to lie or steal or be mean to others. But all of those commandments are included in the commandment to love God and love our neighbor. If we love God and others, we will be sure to be following all the other commandments as well.

## Jesus Teaches Us to Love

At the end of our lives, Jesus will not care how much money we made or how smart we were. But he will ask us, "How much did you love?" The greatest thing we can do in life is to love God and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves.

How does the commandment to love help us in our families at home? It helps us to remember what Jesus taught about love. It helps us to remember not to start fights with our brothers and sisters. It helps us remember to share. How does it help us with our friends? It helps us to remember that we must treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated. It helps us to remember to be kind and helpful to others.

Love is not just a good feeling. Love is a good action toward God and others. Love is praying to God, honoring God, and helping others.

## God's Treasure of Forgiveness

We learn about God in the Bible. Another name for the Bible is **Sacred Scripture**.

When we read Sacred Scripture, we are reading God's Word. Today's Scripture story is not just another story. It is God's Word to us today. We hear God's Word in every Sacrament. We hear God's Word at Mass. We will also hear God's Word in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

After the priest greet us, we make the Sign of the Cross with the priest. Then he says a few words to encourage us to trust in God's mercy. Next we may hear God's Word from the Bible. The priest may read a short passage from Sacred Scripture, or he may ask us to read the passage.

Reading from the Bible helps us to hear about God's love and forgiveness and helps us to love God and one another better. Sacred Scripture can help us see when we may not have loved as fully as we are called to, or when we may have sinned. It tells us that we can trust in God's loving-kindness and that we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

## Things to Remember

- We follow Jesus by following the most important commandment to love God and others.
- We learn about love in Sacred Scripture.
- We can ask God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully.

# Chapter 4: We Follow the Ten Commandments



## Introduction

What rules do you follow in your family? Some family rules might be, “No phones at the table,” or “Hang the towels back up after you use them.” How do your family’s rules help you keep safe and happy? You follow rules at school too. Some school rules might be, “Raise your hand before speaking,” or “Walk, don’t run, in the halls.” How do your school rules help you keep safe and happy?

God has given us rules, sometimes called laws or commandments, too. God’s rules also help all of his people to be safe and happy. Today we will learn more about the rules that God gave us in the Ten Commandments.

## Scripture Story: God Gives His People the Ten Commandments

God’s people were once slaves in Egypt. God chose a man named Moses to lead them to freedom. Then God gave Moses Laws for the

people to follow. The short version of these Laws is called the Ten Commandments. Let’s read them now:

“I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.  
of Egypt, where you were slaves.  
**Worship** no god but me. . . .  
I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.  
Do not use my name for evil purposes. . . .  
Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. . . .  
Respect your father and your mother. . . .  
Do not commit murder.  
Do not commit adultery.  
Do not steal.  
Do not accuse anyone falsely.  
Do not desire another man’s house; . . .  
his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.”  
(Exodus 20:2–3, 6–8, 12–17)