

Confirmed in the

Church



What makes a celebration special for you? Is it the people, the music, the food? What can you do to help everyone feel included?

"[G]rant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ." —*Eucharistic Prayer III*

Put On Love

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12–17

Understanding Scripture

God the Father cares deeply about our well-being. So he sent his Son, Jesus, to save us. The Letter to the Colossians describes many of the good things God the Father has done for us through Jesus.

In this chapter the virtuous life is described once again as reaching its perfection in love. You are putting on the virtuous life. Now let the peace of Christ fill you as you give thanks to God the Father through Jesus. In him we have become members of a community so united that it is "one body." In this community we are to live in peace and thanksgiving as we do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Scripture and You

Each morning as you put on your clothes, do you ever think about also putting on kindness or gentleness or patience? That's not as easy as it sounds, but fortunately, you don't have to do it alone. Luckily it is not up to you alone. God the Father and his Son, Jesus, sent the Holy Spirit to help you live in kindness. The peace of Christ and the word of Christ, which dwell in you, also support you in living peacefully.

In the Church we have the seven sacraments, beginning with Baptism, which help us wear

REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD



Take some time to center yourself, quietly breathing in and out. Silently reflect on the words *compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience*. Think about which of these qualities you would like God to help you strengthen. Ask for his help now.

love like our favorite clothes. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our sins are forgiven; we find pardon and peace. In the Eucharist we share in the very life of Jesus. These two sacraments help us accept and forgive one another as we live lives of peace and thanksgiving.

Many, Yet One

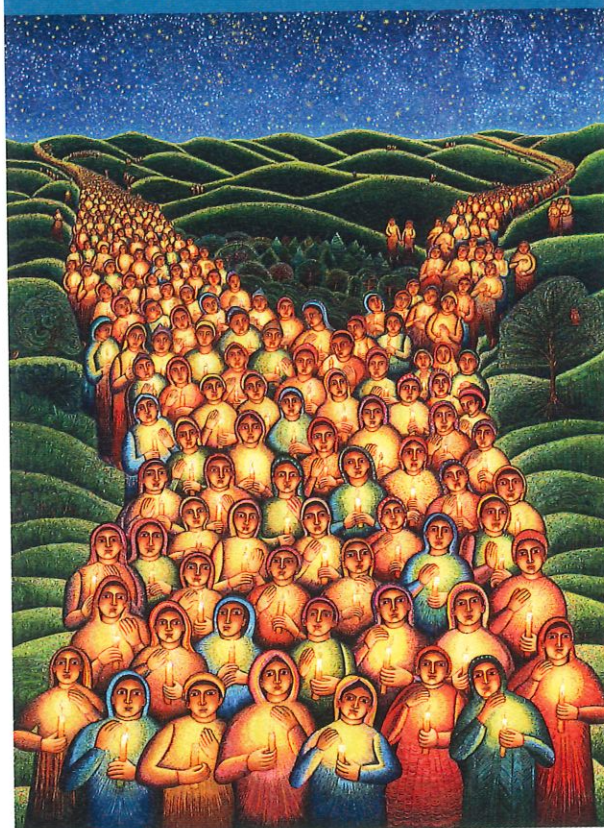
A young woman serving as a missionary in New Guinea brings Holy Communion to a dying mother. Mexican children sing and clap as they process to church for the feast-day Mass of the patroness of their town, the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos. Pope Benedict XVI canonizes an Indian nun at a majestic solemn Mass in Rome.

What makes all these people one? How are we united with the Church in New Guinea, Mexico, and Italy? The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation for all. The Church is the instrument that makes the communion between God and people possible. When we come together to celebrate the Eucharist, we are united with the Church throughout the world and with all the angels and saints as well. We are one through Jesus, the Bread of Life. In the Eucharist our bonds with the worldwide Church are strengthened. We belong not only to our parish community but also to the universal Church.

When we are with our friends, we feel we belong. Every moment is important. We listen intently to what they have to say. We are excited to participate in the conversations. Time goes by quickly, and we make plans to get together again.

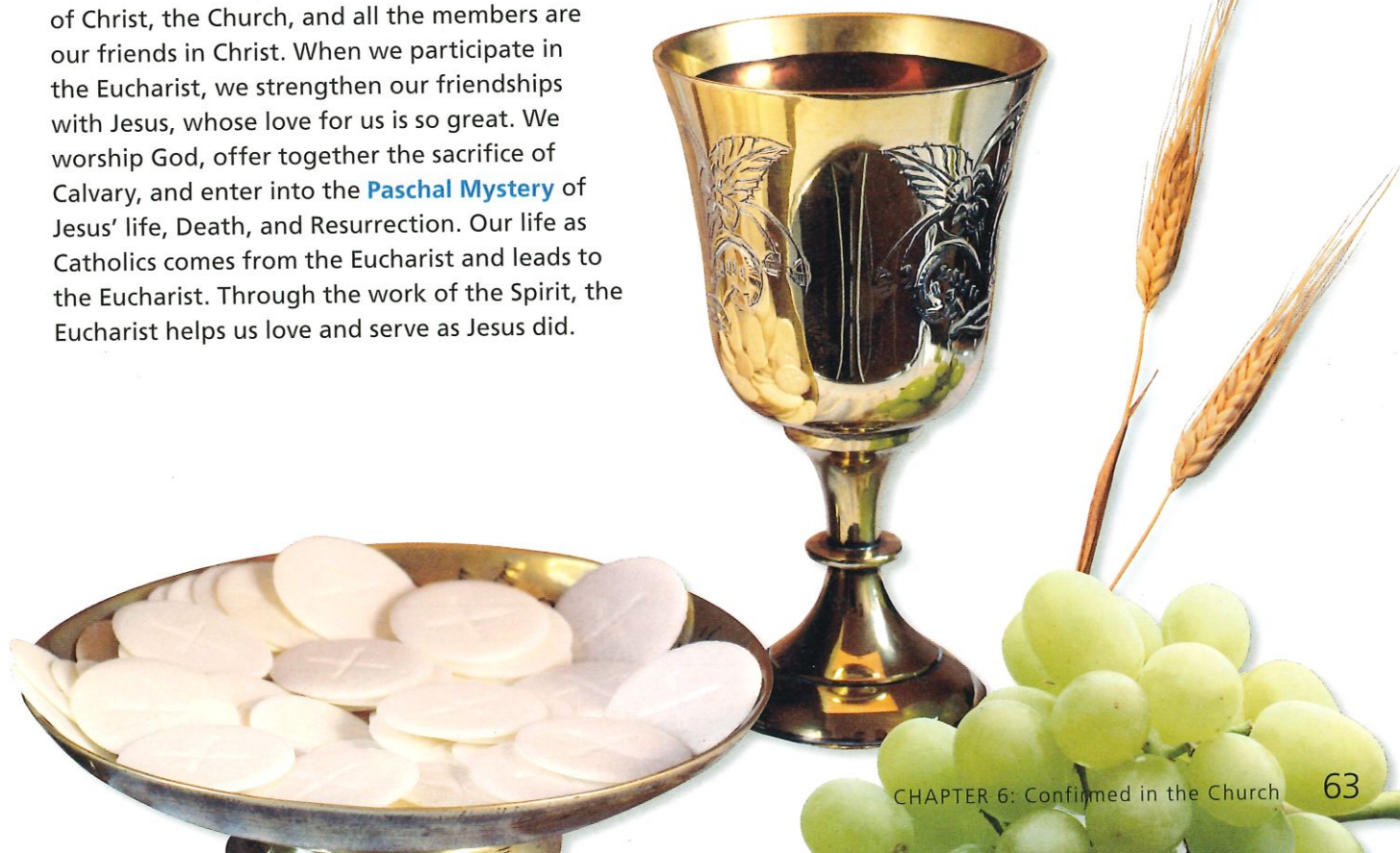
Because of our Baptism, we belong to the Body of Christ, the Church, and all the members are our friends in Christ. When we participate in the Eucharist, we strengthen our friendships with Jesus, whose love for us is so great. We worship God, offer together the sacrifice of Calvary, and enter into the **Paschal Mystery** of Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection. Our life as Catholics comes from the Eucharist and leads to the Eucharist. Through the work of the Spirit, the Eucharist helps us love and serve as Jesus did.

ART LINK



Festival of Lights, John August Swanson, 2000.

Festival de la luz, John August Swanson, 2000.



Jesus Alive!

The Holy Spirit makes Jesus available to the world. When Mary said yes to God, Jesus was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit descended on the disciples at Pentecost, they proclaimed that Jesus was alive in the world. When the Spirit came to you in Baptism, Christ became alive in you. At Mass the Holy Spirit speaks through the Scriptures. Then, in the Eucharistic prayer, the priest prays that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ becomes truly present under the appearance of bread and wine. And Jesus is with us.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus bringing you closer to himself. He makes you one with Jesus in the Mass, when you offer to the Father your joys, sorrows, successes, and failures. The Spirit works

in the community that is gathered to receive the Eucharist and unites all members of this community in faith and love.

Liturgy of the Word

The Mass has two main parts: the **Liturgy of the Word** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. Both God's Word and Jesus Christ's Body and Blood unite us and nourish us as People of God.

In the Liturgy of the Word, you are united with other members of God's family. Just as you hear family members' stories when you celebrate with loved ones, you also hear God's stories in the Liturgy of the Word when you gather at Mass.

MY TURN The Power of God's Word

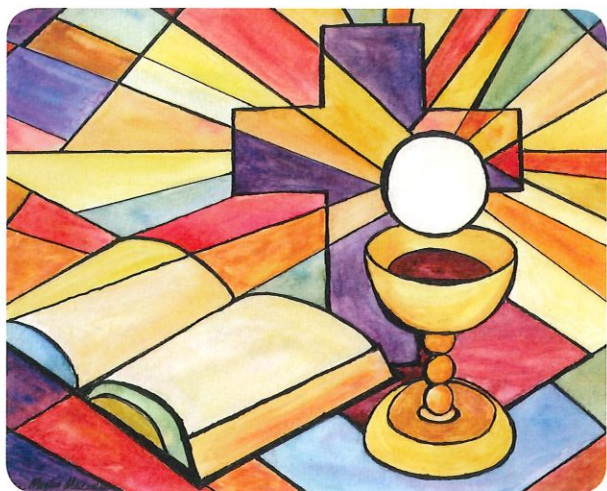
Reflect on the following readings often used in the Confirmation liturgy. Then write how they speak of unity in believing, living, and proclaiming God's message.

1. *Acts of the Apostles 1:8* "[Y]ou will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses . . ." Name two ways that members of your parish are united as witnesses to Jesus.

2. *Luke 4:18* "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor." How can you bring good news to those who are sick, lonely, or in need in other ways?

3. *Luke 10:23* "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." What can you do to show those who are blind to the needs of others how to love as Jesus loves?





Liturgy of the Eucharist

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, you are united with Jesus and his sacrifice. You receive the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine. When you share in the Eucharist, Christ unites you to himself and others. You are one with all who belong to the Church on earth, in Heaven, and in Purgatory. The Eucharist nourishes you to live out the Word of God you have heard proclaimed.

In every liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all blessings we have received through his Son in order to make us his children through the Holy Spirit.

All That We Have

If you really care about something at school—such as chorus, drama, a club, or a sports team—you get involved. In the same way, caring members of God's family get involved in activities that promote the love of God and others. As fully initiated Christians, we belong to the People of God, which makes it part of our mission to care for people. We are all valuable members of the Body of Christ.

During the Eucharist, we unite our sacrifices to the sacrifice of Jesus. We offer our struggles, successes, and services to the Father. At Mass we pray for the needs of the Church and the world, and for the coming of the kingdom.

Through service and prayer for the needs of others, we participate in the best way possible. Since the moments spent celebrating the Eucharist are so important, we respond with the community by praying and singing reverently and by receiving Holy Communion.

MY TURN The Order of Mass

Using pages 104–105 of this book, number the parts of the Mass. Then write *LW* if it is from Liturgy of the Word or *LE* if it is from Liturgy of the Eucharist.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| _____ Homily | _____ |
| _____ Eucharistic Prayer | _____ |
| _____ Prayer over the Offerings | _____ |
| _____ Gospel Reading | _____ |
| _____ Second Reading | _____ |
| _____ Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts | _____ |
| _____ Prayer of the Faithful | _____ |



When Things Go Wrong

As you prepare to become a confirmed Catholic, think about the role you play in the community of faith. You are part of a grace-filled Church that is united around the Eucharist and worships God the Father. Because our Church is human, it is capable of sin. Sin is something we do or fail to do that is contradictory to God's law. It is an offense against God and harms our relationship with him and others. Mortal sin, which breaks our relationship with God and others, must be confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We commit a **mortal sin** when

- we do something that is seriously wrong.
- we freely and willingly choose to do it.



A **venial sin** is a less serious offense that weakens our relationship with God and others. When we are repentant, we are forgiven by prayer, good actions, and receiving Holy Communion. It is recommended that we confess venial sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Just as the goodness of all in the community strengthens the Body of Christ, so does each of our sins hurt and weaken it. Sin brings division and causes us to be at odds with ourselves, others, and God. When we are wounded by sin, Christ heals us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Like a peacemaker who steps in to break up an argument, Jesus Christ came to bring people together, heal the brokenhearted, lead us to a good relationship with God, and restore what was lost by sin. Christ asks us to forgive one

rite



Rite

The Sacrament of Confirmation usually takes place in the context of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated once the confirmands have been confirmed. All are called to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

Meaning

In receiving the Eucharist, you participate in Christ's self-giving and are united as the Church, the People of God.

Daily Life

When we glorify God through our words and actions, we are sharing his love with others.

Life of Faith

The gifts of faith that we receive in Confirmation are strengthened through celebrating the Eucharist and receiving Holy Communion.

another as he forgives us, and he encourages us to seek forgiveness from him and others. The strength to be healers is given to us by Christ through the Holy Spirit.

A Forgiving Heart

For seven happy years, Jane de Chantal managed the castle of her husband, Baron Christophe de Rabutin-Chantal. Each day she gathered her family for Mass, and she supervised the household and her children's education. Jane fed people who were poor and showed her children how to love others.

Sadly, Jane's secure home was torn apart by tragedy. Christophe was killed by another man in a hunting accident. Jane tried to be positive and forgiving, but it was very difficult.

One day, Jane met Bishop Francis de Sales. She celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation with him and told him about her life. Francis told her that she must trust God more and forgive the man who had accidentally killed her husband. Jane's deep faith helped her forgive the one who had hurt her most. Eventually she became a godparent for the man's child. She felt the peace



Saint Jane de Chantal.

Santa Juana de Chantal.

of Christ that comes from a forgiving heart. Later, along with Francis de Sales, Jane founded the Sisters of the Visitation. After three miracles were attributed to her, the Church declared her a saint.

MY TURN How Can We Be Healers?

Read these stories. Determine who is a healer and who is not.

1. José overheard Matt being corrected by his teacher for trying to steal from another student's desk. When José got to the cafeteria, his classmates wanted to know where Matt was. José said that Matt was busy and changed the subject.

Is José a healer? Why or why not?

2. Beth made fun of Anna in front of her friends by mocking the way she sang at practice. Later, Beth came and apologized. Anna told her coldly, "Sorry isn't enough," and walked away.

Is Beth a healer? Why or why not?

Is Anna a healer? Why or why not?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Like Saint Jane de Chantal, we may find it difficult to forgive those who have hurt us. But Jesus calls us to forgive others as we prepare to receive forgiveness of our sins from him. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we encounter Jesus and ask him to forgive our sins through the ministry of the priest. We trust in God's mercy and in the forgiveness of others who belong to the community of faith.

The priest represents Jesus and the forgiving community. When we hear his words of **absolution**, our sins are forgiven, and the Church grows stronger and closer together. The divisions caused by our selfishness are healed, and the bonds of the community are strengthened. The priest is bound by the seal of confession never to reveal what anyone confesses.



1 WITNESS



Dedicated to Liturgy: Blessed Carlos Rodriguez

Carlos Rodriguez was born in Puerto Rico in 1918. When he was in high school, he began to develop health problems that would last his whole life. He left college because of his illness, but he never stopped reading and learning. His great love was to help people understand and love the Mass and the sacraments. Long before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, Carlos promoted liturgical renewal, which included celebrating the Mass in Spanish so that people could better understand it and therefore participate more fully. Many people began to experience a renewed faith because of Carlos's teaching and the integrity with which he served the Church and others. Carlos Rodriguez died in 1963. In 1999 Pope John Paul II declared him blessed because of the example of his life and his dedication to the liturgy. His feast day is July 13.

2 ACT



Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

Blessed Carlos Rodriguez dedicated his life's work to make this a better world, according to God's will. We too, through our daily work, participate in the activity of God our Creator. The wonders produced through human work are signs of God's greatness. Since work contributes to a better human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God. Work gives people a sense of dignity and accomplishment. Work makes it possible for people to be independent and self-reliant. The Church is concerned that all people have the opportunity to work, are paid enough for their work to live decently, have safe and healthy working environments, and are given enough time to rest from work. These are issues that touch all our lives and have a direct connection to our spiritual well-being.

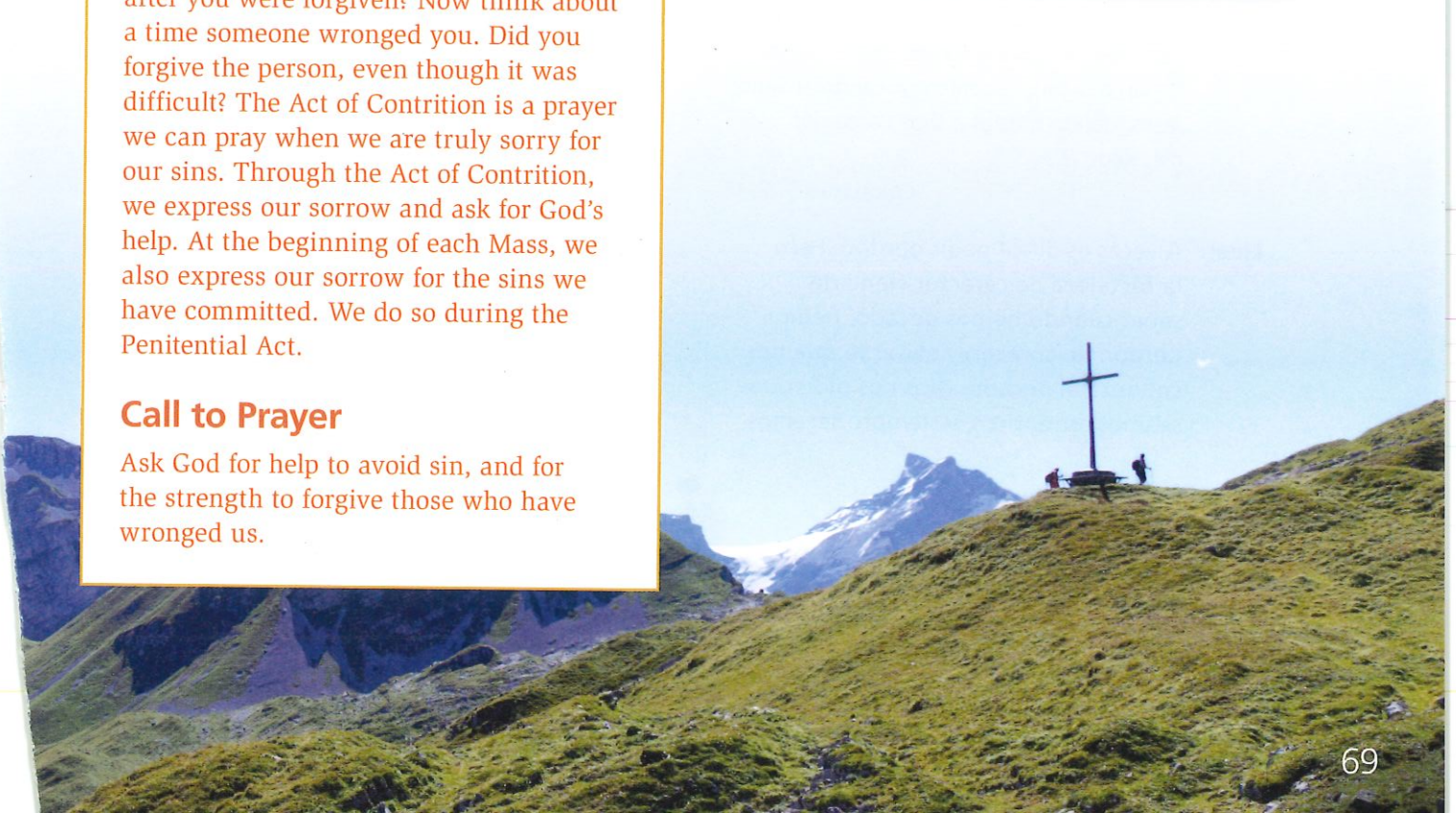
3 PRAY

Act of Contrition

Helping people understand the Liturgy of the Church was at the heart of Blessed Carlos's work and mission. A central rite in the Liturgy of the Church is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Think about a time when you wronged someone. Did you ask for forgiveness? How did you feel after you were forgiven? Now think about a time someone wronged you. Did you forgive the person, even though it was difficult? The Act of Contrition is a prayer we can pray when we are truly sorry for our sins. Through the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow and ask for God's help. At the beginning of each Mass, we also express our sorrow for the sins we have committed. We do so during the Penitential Act.

Call to Prayer

Ask God for help to avoid sin, and for the strength to forgive those who have wronged us.



pray

Act of Contrition

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Gathered as a community of believers, let us listen to God, speaking to us in his Word today and always.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12–17

Leader: Asking for forgiveness is sometimes difficult. But strength in character comes from knowing when we have sinned, being heartfelt in asking for forgiveness, and avoiding whatever leads us to sin. God asks us to be genuine, and we will always be forgiven. The warm embrace

of forgiveness brings us peace in our hearts. Now let us pray together the Act of Contrition.

All: O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Leader: Think about times when you found it difficult to forgive someone or to ask for forgiveness of someone you have wronged. Confirmation helps us build our character so that we can be more like Jesus. Take a few moments now for personal reflection. Speak to God in the quiet of your heart.

All: Loving God, through your gifts, we have the tools we need to be loyal, faithful followers. Please help us find the strength we need when we falter and the grace to recognize when we have done wrong. With your grace, we can be more faithful disciples of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

summary

FAITH SUMMARY

The Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation increase the love and unity of the Church. When we participate in the Eucharist, we strengthen our friendships with Jesus, whose love for us is so great. When we are wounded by sin, Christ heals us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

REMEMBER

How do the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation unite the Christian community?

In the Eucharist we celebrate the mystery of Jesus' sacrifice of love and the holy meal that unites us in the Body of Christ. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled with God, the community, and ourselves.

What are the two main parts of the Mass?

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are the main parts of the Mass. God's Word and Christ's Body and Blood unite and nourish us as People of God.

Why do we offer ourselves in the Eucharist?

We participate fully in the Eucharist when we offer ourselves and pray for the needs of others. We show how much we trust the power and goodness that comes to us. We do this when we respond, pray, sing, and receive Holy Communion.

Words to Know

absolution

Liturgy of

the Eucharist

Liturgy of the Word

mortal sin

Paschal Mystery

venial sin

How does sin weaken the Body of Christ?

Just as the goodness of all in the community strengthens the Church, so does each of our offenses hurt and weaken it. Sin brings division and causes us to be at odds with ourselves, others, and God. Christ forgives our sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

MY CONFIRMATION JOURNAL

Use your journal to enter more deeply into this chapter. Quietly spend time reflecting and recording on journal pages 51–60.

REACH OUT

An examination of conscience is a prayerful review of how we have been living our lives in light of what the Gospel asks of us. It is often based on a reflection on each commandment and on how we have or have not been faithful to that commandment since our last examination. Write an examination of conscience based on 1 Corinthians 13:4–12. You can also use the Examination of Conscience on page 103 of this book.

WITH MY SPONSOR

Arrange with your sponsor to share your insights, questions, and ideas from this chapter and how they relate to your conversations from the *Faith to Faith* magazine.

*Loving God, grant me
the serenity to accept the
things I cannot change;
the courage to change the
things I can; and wisdom
to know the difference.
Amen.*