



*The return of the prodigal son., 1636, by Rembrandt van Rijn.
Purchased 1910. Te Papa (1910-0001-1/80-80)*

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION IN CASES WHERE A PRIEST IS NOT AVAILABLE

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, through his Apostolic Penitentiary has recently issued this reminder to those who do not have access to a priest to make a sacramental confession.

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *rotum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452. [Apostolic Penitentiary 19 March 2020])

In the current health crisis it may be impossible to go to sacramental confession; the Church provides for such situations. Those who come before Almighty God with sincere contrition for their sins and a fervent desire for forgiveness, can be confident of God’s Mercy. Contrition is sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, when this contrition arises from the love of God it is called ‘perfect contrition’.

What does this mean in practical terms? In cases when a priest is not available for a sacramental confession one should:

1. Make an Act of Perfect Contrition; along with
2. A Sincere Request of God for Forgiveness; accompanied by,
3. The Resolve to Make a Sacramental Confession at the First Opportunity.

By devoutly and sincerely performing these actions one can obtain forgiveness of all sins.



**DIOCESE OF
DES MOINES**