

### **The Preparation of the Priest and the Penitent**

15. Priest and penitent should first prepare themselves by prayer to celebrate the Sacrament.

The Priest should call upon the Holy Spirit, that he may receive light and charity from the Spirit; the penitent, on the other hand, should compare his (her) life with the example and commandments of Christ and pray to God for the forgiveness of his (her) sins.

### **Suggestions:**

- Always have a brief examen available to you if you celebrate the sacrament often. An opportunity may arise that you may want to take advantage of.
- In your examination, you are trying to prepare for a conversation between you and the Lord. God already knows all the things you want to confess. You may not be aware of specific sins you want to confess but instead situations that felt off to you. Push into that feeling and determine what the specific sin is.
- The sacrament of Penance is not the place for long-form spiritual direction. This is a place to identify the kinds of sins you committed and how often.
- While vices are not sins, they are still something that you should be working on. You may confess them, especially if you want some advice on how to gain mastery over this or that vice, but it is not helpful to simply list all of your vices that you have ever struggled with.
- Plan a time. Do not rely on a spontaneous practice of the sacrament of penance. Instead, plan at least once every three months to every two weeks. This gives you time to use an examination of conscious.
- When using an examination of conscious, do not let them stress you out. You get to do this again. These writers are trying to hit a wide slough of the human experience. Not all of these things will apply to you and they are not the same in severity or importance.
- The use of St. Ignatius' examination of consciousness while different is an excellent tool. It can help you connect the days so that you can see yourself progress over time.
- You can write this list down. It is sometimes harder to tell which of these things is bothering you when the list is read. So, you may want to tell the priest which you would like some help on.
- You can always ask for help.