

## XII. PENANCE/ANOINTING OF THE SICK

*THESIS: (a) parte biblica: peccato e perdono; il problema della sofferenza; atteggiamento e prassi di fronte alla malattia; (b) parte storica e insegnamento del magistero; (c) parte sistematica: elementi fondamentali e significato teologico della celebrazione della riconciliazione del cristiano peccatore e dell'unzione degli infermi; elementi di teologia della riconciliazione.*

### Introduction:

#### A. Presuppositions:

1. Presupposed is that Christians sin after baptism. The Apostolic community experienced sin and was aware of the means in which sinners could be reconciled again into the community.

Penance: forgiveness of a Catholic who is a sinner

Baptism: forgives sin of a non-Christian

2. Practice of penance as a sacrament is in **crisis** today. Though the Church has seen that baptism and eucharist are involved in the forgiveness of sins, the Church has always had a special practice to deal with the presence of sin within the community.

#### B. Method:

In following Bible, History and Theology, we do not mean to imply that the Bible is just the beginning of the historical development of our understanding of the sacrament. The Biblical witness is far broader than the establishment of the sacrament -- for it deals with **Jesus' own claim of being the compassion of the Father incarnate**. For that reason, the apostolic community, in both the message of reconciliation and their practice of it, are **normative** for the rest of the development of history. Of course, the Magisterium is the authentic interpreter of that apostolic witness for all generations.

### Part One: Sacrament of Penance:

#### I. Biblical message:

##### Summary: Three Key Points:

- a. **Jesus is Forgiveness**
- b. **Power of forgiveness is given to the Church**
- c. **Apostolic Witness of forgiveness of sins**

#### A. The power of Jesus to forgive sins:

##### 1. Announcement of pardon in the OT

a. **Prophetic tradition at the time of the exile:** Focused on the weakness of man and the powerful intervention of God to change the human heart -- to write the law on the flesh of the heart.

b. **Ezekiel focuses on the nature of conversion** -- "No longer shall you say 'Their fathers have eaten green grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge.'" -- One takes responsibility for one's own journey from sin to conversion. Not only is conversion a personal matter, but it is also through the power of God, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you" (EZ 36:25) God can even make dead bones come alive!(EZ 37)

##### 2. Jesus and sin

a. **At the beginning of his public ministry**, Jesus continues the message of the Baptist, "Reform your lives and believe in the gospel." The difference in the message, however, is that in the impasse created by our own weakness, God stretches forth his hand to

sinners and effects their conversion. This compassion of God is made real in the public ministry of Jesus. Unlike John, Jesus not only announces judgment, he **is** judgment. We will be judged on how we respond to Him (Lk 12:8). Jesus anticipates the moment of judgment not to condemn the world but to pardon and absolve those who are open to his salvific action through faith. The response to Jesus is: (a) recognize sin and (b) look to conversion.

**(1) The scandal of eating with sinners** -- God has not declared them “unclean.” -- signs of the **eschatological** banquet where “sinners and prostitutes” will be seated at the banquet. The Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost” (Zaccheus) OR “ Go and learn the meaning of the words, “It is mercy I desire and not sacrifice.” I have come to call not the self-righteous but sinners.” (call of Matthew) The forgiveness of sins comes, **not through sacrifices but through the power of God’s Word** -- that power is exercised through mercy. In the eyes of the world, mercy is weakness. In God’s eyes, it’s a power that is able to heal and forgive.

**(2) The prophetic action of forgiving the sins of the paralytic** -- the power of God who can make whole, **both** spiritually and physically; I have the power (**exousia**) to forgive sins. The power is ascribed to the “Son of Man” -- allusion to Daniel 7. It is Christ’s Word of forgiveness that has power to forgive. Christ now is the sovereign judge, in possession of supreme authority. At the end of the pericope, we hear of the amazement of the crowd -- “When the crowds saw this they were struck with awe and glorified God who had given such authority to human beings.” Matthew’s community is aware that this divine exousia has been extended to the community (human beings) as well. **NB:** There is a shift here from forgiveness **once a year** due to ritual **forms** (Jewish) to forgiveness now due to **faith at anytime**.

**(3) The prophetic action of receiving the signs of the penitent woman’s contrition in the house of Simon** and saying that her sins, though many, are forgiven her. (Luke 7)

**(4) The preaching of Jesus concerning the forgiveness of sins:** Luke 15 (lost sheep, lost coin, prodigal son) -- the God who goes in search of the sinner.

**b. The conquering of sin in the Death-Resurrection:**

1. We believe that the **ultimate act of forgiveness** comes to us by means of the death-resurrection (his death is the **meritorious** cause, his resurrection the **efficient** cause). This belief reflected in the rite -- “God the Father of mercy, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself.”

2. The strange paradox of the cross is that sin is overcome through a **passio**, a submission to sin (being victimized by sin) as well as a **compassio**, and identification with the sinner (Godforsakenness). The mystery of the cross is thus a stumbling block to the Jews and an absurdity to the Gentiles, but to those who believe, it is the power of God. **NB:** Power of forgiveness is both merciful and paradoxical (force and weakness together).

**B. Transmission of the Power to forgive sins as given to the Church:**

**NB:** Matthew emphasizes the ecclesial and disciplinary

John emphasizes the pneumatic and spiritual

**1. The power of binding-loosing in Matthew’s gospel**

**a. Matthew 16:17-19. (Given to Peter)**

The confession of faith that leads to the establishment of a community of faith. The definitive reconciliation that was won for mankind through the blood of the cross needs to be personally (and communally) appropriated through the life of the Church. The Church is the Messianic community, sacramentally signifying and making efficacious the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom does suffer violence, and the powers of hell wage its war (a reality attested to by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*); nevertheless, the powers of death will not prevail. The three “promises” made to Peter and the church -- Complimentary images:

(1) **The rock:** The power of God seeks, in incarnational form, its tangible manifestations. This community is not an invisible or spiritually constituted group, but a **concrete communio with a visible head.**

(2) **The keys:** A sign of **stewardship** (cf. Is 22:22 -- Eliakim, prime minister, is given the key of the house of David). The exercise of authority is always in the name of Christ. [There is also an **eschatological** sense here in that it is the keys of heaven and **representative** sense.]

(3) **The power of binding and loosing:** The power, concretely exercised and yet vicariously in the name of Christ, is described in this rabbinical fashion - to bind and loose:

## 2 principle meanings in rabbinical writings:

### (a) \*Juridical Sense:

**The power both to excommunicate** from the community and to reconcile the excommunicated to the community. A disciplinary power.

### (b) \*Magisterial Sense: (moral authority)

**The power to bind someone to the prescription of the law** or to loose, dispense, them from the law. A power to interpret the law and declare something permitted or prohibited.

Perhaps both meanings are intended -- the authority to interpret the law and the disciplinary power to exclude and to readmit people into the community. [Two other senses are : Sense of **totality** (since he has authority over both extremes and sense of **demonological** (tied = under power of the demon))]

### b. Matthew 18:15-18: (Given to all the twelve)

#### \*Ecclesial Dimension emphasized here!

(1) The logion is directed to the Twelve -- the power of binding and loosing is extended to them (but not the power of the Keys which is given to Peter alone). At least in Matthew’s community, this power of binding and loosing is seen as a participatory power, exercised in dependence upon Peter.

(2) Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven -- whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. The pronouncement of sentence of excommunication and the pronouncement of readmittance to the community is ratified by God. Why? Perhaps explained in the next logion -- Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.” **The presence of Christ in the eschatological community guarantees that God will ratify the Church’s decisions regarding sinners.** Some have a difficulty in applying this text to penance as such -- it seems to speak of a juridical action (excommunication) as opposed to the sacramental act of forgiveness. And yet, in the time of Matthew’s church, the distinction

between the juridical and the sacramental is not developed. To be cut off from the community of the Church is to be cut off from salvation; the Church is not simply a human society but the community in which Christ is eternally present (I am with you always). The readmittance into the community (being “loosed”) presupposes the pardon of sin (and that the power to forgive sins is extended to the community).

**(3) Bind & Loose are related as such: To bind in order to loose!**

## **2. John’s gospel: pneumatic and spiritual**

**a. John 20:21-23: (passive and active element insofar as what is done in history is also done in the celestial realm)**

(1) As the Father has sent me, so I send you: What the Church does is an extension of Christ’s **mission** from the Father, continuing that mission in time and space.

(2) Breathes on them -- receive **the Holy Spirit**: The Church receives and possesses in itself the supernatural means necessary to carry out the divine mission. It is the necessary backdrop to understand the next part of the logion. The community is not merely a social organization with juridical laws and obligations that are to be met (forgiving and retaining), but a spirit-filled community, filled not only with the authority of the one who “missions” the Church but with the presence of that abiding grace which makes the process of reconciliation possible. The church then is not just juridical but is the visible community in which the invisible life of grace is given to men.

### **b. “To forgive and to retain”**

**1. The verb to forgive (aphiemi)** is the technical term in the New Testament to speak of the forgiveness of sins -- an action by which the offence is pardoned, blotted out; the debt is settled and canceled. (Our Father retains this connotation -- forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.) **NB**: Emphasis is reconciliation with God

**2. To “retain” sins (kratein)** is an expression more difficult to understand because it appears nowhere else in the NT. Kratein has a positive sense -- to be strong, powerful, to dominate, reign, conquer prevail. Never does it connote the refusal or withholding of an act on. To “retain:” sins **cannot** mean the power to refuse to forgive sins. It must refer to an action which has a **positive effect**. Perhaps the text from Matthew can illuminate the meaning -- the comparison with Mt’s gospel is justified because of the similarity of structure (suggestion of opposing actions placed in antithetical parallelism: forgive-retain: bind-loose)

**3. Comparison of “retain” with “bind”**. Retaining the sin then takes on the meaning of binding the sinner to the act of excommunication, that is, **excluding the sinner from the communion of the faithful**. This penitential excommunication is a positive action -- a sentence pronounced by the Church which effects the separation of the sinner from the ecclesial community and to exact obligations which need to be met for readmission. Thus, **John and Matthew describe the same action from two distinct but complimentary points of view. The ecclesial and disciplinary aspect of Christian Penance appears above all in Matthew while the spiritual and pneumatic aspect are treated in John.**

**C. The practice and doctrine of the Apostolic Church concerning penance.**

### **1. Description of sin:**

#### **a. Sin in general:**

1. In Romans 5:12 ff, man is described as being able to see God and still he did not **choose** him. Thus, responsibility plays a big role in sin.

2. Rms. 7:14 FF: sin is also a **power** that must be subjected.
3. Sin is also seen as a **personal** act.

Liberation of sin: Faith in Jesus that frees us and gives us justification.

**b. Three Types of sin:**

1. **Sin of Pagan: idolatry (refusal to recognize Creator and be thankful.**

2. **Sin of Jews: Belief in their own justification.**

3. **Sin of Christian: Contradiction in call to a “new being” and a break with the community of salvation.**

NT witnesses **both** to the reality of sins among Christians within the community of faith and to their impeccability (affirm justification by faith). The point is that penance would not be needed if baptism were lived well.

1. Lk:15,ff. Shows what forgiveness is;Pt: Link between forgiveness and joy

2. Mt. 9:1-8: Jesus is seen as he who has the power to forgive sins (he has the exousia to do this). Jesus hands this on to Peter and the apostles.

**c. Summary:**

**a. NT recognizes that there are different gravities of sins:**

1. **Daily Sins:** (“venial sins”)

2. **Grave sins** (special acts needed; sense of excommunication for these “mortal sins”). These people wanted to live their own way and succeeded to grow apart from the community.

**b. NT recognizes two forms of correction:**

Some texts refer to (**Ordinary**) fraternal correction of sinner while others speak of a (**Solemn**) concrete exclusion of a Christian due to serious sin.

1. **exclusion due to gravity of sin**

2. **exclusion began with a sentence pronounced by community**

3. **Twofold reason for exclusion:**

a. free community from bad influence

b. help goad person to conversion and readmission.

4. **Three forms of exclusion:**

a. malediction

b. interruption of social links

c. exclusion from Eucharist

**d. Forgiveness by faith:**

1. recognition of guilt

2. open of one to word of forgiveness

Penance was part of this to integrate a person’s decision and reestablish existential union.

**2. How does the Church deal with the one who sins since Baptism was unrepeatable?**

**a. II Th 3:6-15;** (Person who would not work): “If anyone does not obey our word as expressed in this letter, take note of this person not to associate with him, that he may be put to shame.” However, **the purpose of separation is to goad the person into repentance.** Thus, Paul adds, “Do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

**b. I Cor 5:1-13:** The person who commits **incest** (sounds like a solitary case of a man living with his father's wife) -- "The one who did this deed should be expelled from your midst." The sentence which Paul pronounces: "you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord." What exactly does "delivered to Satan for the destruction of flesh" mean? It can mean that the man who is excommunicated is delivered to Satan, that is, he comes no longer under the protection of the eschatological community of Jesus' lordship over sin and evil -- the region outside of which Satan is still master. But, the **excommunication is medicinal** --he will "bottom out" so to speak and be moved to change. Another interpretation would be that through excommunication, the man will undergo some program of penance -- through these ascetical practices, the concupiscence of the flesh will be destroyed and thus he can be readmitted into the community of the Church. In any event, it is clear that the excommunication is not for vindictive purposes but as a **goad** to conversion. The penalty is inflicted for repentance. It is also a means of protecting the community from the contamination of the sinner (thus the warning about how a little yeast leavens the whole dough).

**c. II Cor 2:5:** A man had offended Paul and the community by his conduct. He was excommunicated, corrected and now readmitted. Now Paul says, "you should forgive and encourage him instead, or else the person may be overwhelmed by excessive pain." The person is to be forgiven "so that we might not be taken advantage of by Satan." To deny pardon is to allow Satan to win. Once the sinner has repented and readmitted into the ecclesial community, he encounters salvation and the friendship of Christ. The process of exclusion and readmission is not merely a juridical or external action on the part of the Church. This action has supernatural effects regarding a man's salvation or perdition. **NB: Forgiveness = readmission in love!**

**d. II Cor 7:8:** Paul rejoices in the peoples sadness and sorrow, caused by a previous letter, because it led them to repentance and metanoia.

### **3. Do irremissible sins exist?**

**NB: Sense of the New Testament is that all sins can be forgiven. There is no objective limit to God's power to forgive but the disposition of the individual can make forgiveness impossible.**

#### **a. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.**

Mk 3:28-29 and par.: "Amen I say to you, all sins and all blasphemies that people utter will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin." The context of the saying follows the accusation of the Pharisees that Jesus is expelling demons by the power of Beelzebul. **Their blasphemy is against the Holy Spirit -- that they do not recognize the power of the Spirit working through the activity of Jesus.** The reason the sin is unforgivable is because **forgiveness presupposes faith in Christ.** While a man is in a state of culpable incredulity, he has a spiritual disposition in which God's forgiveness cannot reach him. These texts are reflections of the Christian community -- the unpardonable sin is a rejection of the Holy Spirit, which is a rejection of the power to recognize the activity of Christ present in the teaching and healing Church.

#### **b. Apostasy:**

**Hebrews 6:4-6:** “For it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again, since they are **recrucifying** the son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt.” Later in the tradition of the Church, the rigorists (Montanists, Novatians) appeal to this text to deny reconciliation to specific categories of sinners. Rather, the letter is referring to one specific kind of sin -- apostasy those who have fallen away. The author is writing to Jewish Christians because the persecution was tempting them to renounce Christ and return to the Jewish law. But how are we to understand the impossibility of repentance and reconciliation of these apostates?

**1. The impossibility refers to the repetition of baptism,** the sacrament of Christian conversion.

**2. The impossibility refers to the subjective dispositions of those sinners** (it is virtually impossible for such a sinner to change).

**3. The impossibility refers to the apostate’s return to the beginning of the first instruction of the faith.**

**4. Sin of apostasy itself is such that the person places himself outside of the sphere of salvation** (since there is no salvation without faith in Christ).

**5. The impossibility refers to recrucifying the Son of God again** -- the apostate returns to Judaism now empty of messianic hope.

It seems that the epistle is not referring to the impossibility of a post-baptismal penance for the grave sins committed by the Christian who has not renounced the faith; it refers to the particular case of the abandonment of faith in Christ. Outside of Christ, the Mediator of this new and definitive covenant, there exists no other way of salvation. It is not possible to deny him, and persisting in this denial to hope to be saved.

### **c. Deadly/Non-Deadly Sins:**

**I John 5:16** -- “If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray.” The most common interpretation of this deadly sin is apostasy -- the culpable abandonment of the Christian faith. In Johannine literature, death = not believing in Christ (judgment is now). The prayer for such sin is useless because the person has willingly placed himself outside the context of salvation and persists in a voluntary rejection of Christ. Some have said that the sin refers to a particular form of heresy, a kind of docetism. In any event, John is not saying that these people cannot return or that we can’t pray for their return. **But we cannot ask God to pardon them while they persist in their aversion to Christ. Deadly sin= sin that implies loss of faith in Jesus Christ!**

**NOTE:** None of these passages recognizes a limit to the power of forgiveness given by Jesus. If there is true conversion, all sins can be forgiven [irremissible sins due to their exceptional gravity]. Rather, they treat of the necessity to be united to Christ through faith in order to receive pardon of sins. What is fundamental about this perditious state is its **Christological character**. Jesus is the sole Mediator of the new covenant. In denying or rejecting Christ (or in recognizing the fundamental truth about Christ given us in the Spirit), we choose to place

ourselves outside the sphere of salvation. This is the eternal death already prefigured and anticipated.

## **II. Highlights of the History**

### **A. The first millennium:**

The evidence of the early Church was that the conversion entailed in baptism was a serious enterprise; nevertheless, as we have seen from the NT evidence, there is the possibility that one might waver in that baptismal confession and find himself apart from the community of salvation. The celebration of the sacrament of penance was reserved for those serious sins. With the exception of Tertullian, who while under the influence of Montanism held that murder, apostasy and adultery could not be forgiven, and Novatian who likewise believed that not all sins were forgiven, the Church held that every sin could be forgiven if the person turned away from his offense and did penance and expiation.

### **B. Two Great Periods:**

#### **1. Ancient Practice: (Public or Canonical Penance): up to 7th c.**

**NB: Hermas (penance only celebrated once in life)**

**Cyprian (Novatian Apostates of 249-251 persecution:**

**idea: penance should match the gravity of crimes)**

**Tertullian (Montanist Period: There are unforgiveable sins)**

#### **a. Three General Characteristics:**

##### **1. Unrepeatable: (Parallel with Baptism)**

In the Shepherd of Hermas is expressed the belief that sacrament of Penance could only be celebrated once in a lifetime. As a result, more and more Christians who had fallen into grave sin had put off penance until the end of their life.

##### **2. Grave Sins (with grave penances) [Tert: this changes to unforgiveable sins]**

##### **3. Exceptional Process.**

#### **b. Communal Process of Reconciliation (Inv. the Bishop)**

The procedure involved being enrolled in the order of penitents, exclusion from the communal celebrations of the community, public penances. Clearly, however, was present the theology that **sin was alienation from the community as well as from God, and reconciliation, the public act of being received again into the life of the Church** was likewise a communal act.

#### **c. Form of Rite:**

##### **1. Imposition of Penance by bishop**

- public ceremony of separation
- with exomologesis (public ack. of sinfulness)
- penitential order

##### **2. Penitential Act (4 orders)**

- flentes
- audientes
- substrati
- consistentes

##### **3. Reconciliation: liturgical rite with imposition of hands**



NB: Are there other practices that were reconciliatory in nature in existence at this time? Yes, including private confession with therapeutic effect and practices in monasteries. However, as a “praxis sacram”, only the public one is considered sacramental. These penances were severe.

**Two key elements: (Both present)**

**1. Personal:**

The public form did have a moment of confession that spoke of individual sins. Thus, it was not just general sinfulness but individual sins are still the focus.

**2. Ecclesial:**

Reconciliation was part of the liturgical communal celebration.

**b. The theology of the Eastern Church:** the differences with the West can be seen in their attitudes concerning the purpose of the practice of penances. In the east, the emphasis is on the penitential effort of the sinner as a process of **purification**, whereas in the West (especially North Africa), the purpose of penance is to offer **expiation** and **satisfaction** so that the person can be readmitted into the community of the Church -- the right order had to be restored.

**2. Private, Individual and Repeatable confession: “Penitenza Tariffata”**

a. The main impetus in this development seems to have come from the **Irish** and Anglo-Saxon churches. The absence of a public rite of penance and reconciliation had the consequence of opening this practice to the confession of minor sins. From the seventh century on, minor offenses (which Augustine held were forgiven through the recitation of the Lord’s prayer) were included as matter for the sacrament. From Ireland, the practice of frequent and private confession spread to the continent through the missionaries.

**b. Six Characteristics: (from Libri Penitenziali)**

**1. Private: between priest and penitent without community (there was a difference between confession of laity and ecclesiastical penance).**

**2. Repeatable** (and became frequent)

**3. For many grave sins and less severe, too.**

**4. Priest was administrator,**

**5. Penance was limited.**

**6. Introduction of penitential rite.**

**c. Individual Rite:**

**1. Go to priest**

**2. kneel at altar and recite penitential psalms**

**3. imposition of penance**

**Key shift:** At first, the schema was confession, severe penance and then absolution. However, for pastoral purposes, it shifted to confession, absolution and then penance (satisfaction). Absolution prayer became *indicative* in mood.

**4. return for reconciliation**

**Abuses occurred with this rite**, including substituting money for penance and the loss of any sense of conversion because the penitential act followed the absolution. The point was that the contrition remained the only “contribution” of the penitent.

**d. Two other Rites:**

**1. Public Penance: which dies out.**

**2. Pilgrimage: public non-solemn form -- was abused and eventually suppressed.**

**e. Some consequences:**

**1. Penance becoming a devotional act**

**2. Excommunication** becomes the public forum for dealing with public sins. Originally, the Church's ban has a spiritual salvific character because it was tied to the sacrament. Now, it is seen as a **punitive, juridical act**.

**3. The focus is shifted from penance and reconciliation to *confessio***

**4. The sacrament becomes individualized -- communal nature is lost .**

**C. Doctrinal systematization in Middle Ages:**

**Summary: Two Issues:**

**A. Shift to Personal Point of View**

**Where is the root of certitude that grace was received in confession? What is the moment that gives grace?**

The reason this is true is because absolution followed confession directly and no longer after the satisfaction of penance. The focus shifts to person's interior disposition: **Contrition**.

**Model:** Individual Confession - Penance- Absolution

**Answer: Contrition: interior disposition of a person**

**1. Ancient Church:** Exclusion from Eucharistic celebration but not from the Word showed a person's disposition.

**2. Middle Ages:** requirement to say individual grave sins presupposes psychological conditions:

a. freedom

b. responsibility

**Point:** Contrition is decisive

**B. Nature/Role of Absolution:**

**Since the focus is now on individual, what does absolution (and its ecclesial dimension implied) add that contrition does not accomplish?**

**Answer: Notion of remission of eternal penalty vs. temporal penalty.**

**Most** heeded the notion that the **cause of forgiveness was the contrition of the sinner**. The **ecclesial dimension** was reduced to that of the necessity rooted in **divine positive law**.

**1. Peter Lombard:** the reason for the forgiveness of sin was contrition and confession (sforzo of Christian to convert himself). Absolution is a sign that the sin is already forgiven. For Abelard, **absolution is only the sign** of re-admittance into the Church -- it has nothing to do with God's forgiveness!

**a. Bonaventure** held that repentance led to the forgiveness of sin but that absolution led to the reconciliation of the sinner to the Church.

**b. Hugh of St. Victor**, on the other hand felt that absolution was the release from punishment that sin incurred while contrition forgave the sin. The problem is how can the sin be forgiven while the penalty remain?.

**2. St. Thomas Aquinas: united personal and ecclesial dimensions**

**a.** Integrates the acts of the penitent (quasi-matter) with the absolution of the priest (form) into the single sacrament of Penance. Matter and form combine to present the

single sacramental cause. Thomas taught that the **proximate matter** of Penance consisted of the three acts of the penitent -- **contrition, confession and the intention to make satisfaction.**

b. He also distinguished between **attrition and contrition**, claiming that the sacramental **absolution itself could change an imperfect sorrow to a perfect sorrow.** Thus, part of the res of the sacrament was the contrition given by grace! NB: Res and sacramentum (immediate effect) for Thomas was contrition. For the ancients it was “reconciliation with the Church”.

**Attrition:** Imperfect contrition is sorrow and detestation of sin motivated not by a perfect love of God but by sin’s malice or fear of hell or God’s punishment. The issue here is the love of God as the basis of perfect contrition. Attrition cannot justify someone without penance but perfect contrition can because it includes the votum for the sacrament.

**3. Duns Scotus:** While confession and contrition are to be regarded as necessary conditions for receiving the sacrament, **the sole cause of forgiveness is the absolution.** Furthermore, attrition is a sufficient disposition for justification in the sacrament (While there is no grace involved in attrition, and here Scotus agrees with Aquinas, attrition is still a kind of “love of God” and sign of conversion). Though he maintained that an attrite penitent becomes contrite in the sacrament, he understood this not in the sense that imperfect sorrow makes room for an act of perfect sorrow, but that the same act remaining, the penitent may be called contrite because of the infusion of grace. In other words, attrition itself in some way proceeds from a love of God.

**4. The council of Florence** came to endorse Thomas’ theology of the sacrament. Decree for Armenians (1439):

- a. Penance is a sacrament
- b. quasi-matter: the acts of the penitent (contrition [including both sorrow for sin and firm resolve not to sin again], oral confession and satisfaction); the form of the sacrament is absolution.
- c. The effect of the sacrament: forgiveness of sins.

### **5. Protestant Reformation:**

**a. The Augsburg Confession (1530)** holds that Baptism, Eucharist and Penance are the true sacraments of the New Law. The Confession insists that Lutherans have not abolished confession and the priest’s absolution. **The purpose of absolution is, however, reduced to arousing in the sinner faith or confidence in God’s mercy,** since it is by such faith that the sinner becomes righteous in the eyes of God. Contrition is the first step -- but it is not considered a sorrow for sin that mechanically earns or merits God’s forgiveness but it is the terror of a stricken conscience when faced with God’s threats of punishment. This terror yields to faith or confidence in God’s unearned mercy. In this is his forgiveness and justification. Luther valued private confession and absolution as a means of arousing faith and confidence in the sinner. **Schema:** Contrition is the key to all Christian life. Confession and satisfaction must be seen as forms of contrition. Absolution is the announcement of the forgiveness of sins.

**b. Calvin** admitted its value for those troubled in conscience but he denied it was a sacrament instituted by Christ.

**6. The Council of Trent: 1551 -- 14th Session.** The Fathers drew up nine doctrinal chapters and 15 canons that present an excellent synthesis of the Catholic teaching on Penance. (DS 1668-93).

a. "Penance was indeed at all times necessary for all men who had stained themselves by any mortal sin in order to obtain grace and justice."

b. The foundation of the sacrament are in **Jn 20** -- it is a conferral of the power of forgiveness (and not just a command to "preach" forgiveness.)

c. Confession itself is seen as a "**tribunal**" with the priest-judge passing sentence.

NB: Sense of administrative power (amnesty) and not necessarily judgment.

d. **Form** = "**ego te absolvo**"; the "**quasi-matter**" are the acts of the penitent (confession, contrition, satisfaction). The indicative form of absolution therefore is what is necessary.

e. **The res is reconciliation with God.** For those disposed, it can also bring peace and serenity of conscience. (N.B.: Nothing is mentioned concerning reconciliation with the Church!!)

f. **Contrition** holds the first place of the acts of the penitent, consisting of **sorrow** of the soul and **detestation** of the sin, along with the firm **resolve** not to sin again. "Moreover the Council teaches that, although it sometimes happens that this contrition is perfect through charity and reconciles man to God before this sacrament is actually received, this reconciliation, nevertheless is not to be ascribed to contrition itself without the desire for the sacrament, a **desire** which is included in it."

g. **Attrition**, if it also excludes the will to sin and implies the hope for pardon, is a gift from God and a prompting of the Spirit, disposes him to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament. However, attrition, without the sacrament of penance, cannot of itself lead the sinner to justification.

h. **Confession**: Since confession is seen as a tribunal, sentence cannot be pronounced without a confession of sins. The tribunal is not only seen in terms of priest forgiving or retaining sins [here retaining seems to be a matter of withholding absolution, not the issue of binding one to a decree of excommunication] but also in terms of the penances he assigns. Sins are confessed "specifically and in particular"

i. For **venial sins** (devotional confession) confession of them may be omitted without guilt and they can be expiated by other remedies.

j. **Penances** are to be imposed that are **salutary** and suitable. Penances help us form new habits and the heal the after-effects of sin. "However, this satisfaction which we make for our sins is not ours in such a way that it not be through Christ Jesus. For while we can do nothing of ourselves as of ourselves, we can do everything with the cooperation of Him who strengthens us. It is in Christ in whom we live, in whom we merit, in whom we make satisfaction, bringing forth worthy fruits of penance; these fruits have their efficacy from Him, by Him they are offered to the Father and through Him they are accepted by the Father."

k. "per diritto divino": ambiguous sense but the point is that it is legitimate.

### III. Systematic Theology

#### A. Vatican II and the ecclesiological dimension of Penance

NB: New Rite focuses upon **reconciliation with the Church** and the nature of **conversion**. It also speaks far more in Trinitarian terms.

**Three Forms:**

- a. Ordinary
- b. Ordinary within a communal celebration
- c. General absolution
  - a. only when physical or moral impossibility to use the first, preferred form
  - b. good disposition and true sense of penance
  - c. need for individual sacrament (for mortal sins) before another general absolution.

**B. Four Main Ideas of Vatican II:**

**1. Exhortation for priests to go to confession**

**2. Reconciliation is with God and the Church (LG 11)**

“Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from the mercy of God for offenses committed against Him. They are at the same time reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins, and which by charity, example and prayer seeks their conversion.”

**Key:** Three-fold effect of Penance:

Reconciliation with God

Reconciliation with the Church

Anticipation of Eschatological Judge

**3. Renewal of Sacramental Rite:** emphasizes the **Community**

**a. Four Moments:**

**1. Hear the Word of God**

**2. Confession** (broad sense to include confession of faith)

**3. Word of Forgiveness:** power of HS and mediated through the Church with a Christological, Trinitarian and eschatological context

**4. Sintesi:** to recapture joy.

**b. Communal Aspect is threefold:**

1. Ministerial dimension

2. Aid to conversion

3. Intercession and Prayer

**4. Key word: Reconciliation**

**a. Reconciliation vs. Confession of Devotion**

Only in the case of grave sin can one properly speak of reconciliation.

**b. Structure of Reconciliation:**

**\*Dialogue, \*to discover truth, \*to liberate** (internal leads to external dialogue)

**Confession: has two functions:**

a. to help uncover the truth

b. render actual the forgiveness of God

**c. Theology of reconciliation (Vat. II & St. Paul)**

1. Subject of reconciliation is the Father

2. It is a universal reconciliation

3. Mediated through Jesus' death and resurrection

4. It is already accomplished.

**C. The Ecclesial dimension of the sacrament:** (2nd half of absol. form)

This aspect was central in the practice of the sacrament in the first centuries: the inscription in the order of penitents involves a visible separation from the community. In the meantime, the community prayed for the penitent during the long penitential process. The solemn and formal reconciliation of the penitent took place before the community. Hence, the reconciliation with the Church was seen as condition and means for pardon before God. Here, the council draws out the reconciliation of the Church (the question is still open as to how these two effects of the sacrament are interrelated -- they are simply placed conjunctively side by side.) Likewise, the idea of the Church praying for the penitent is brought out.

a. Until the thirteenth century, **absolution** was seen as reintegrating into **full communion** with the Church. The early scholastics saw reconciliation as an effect of absolution (theory of declarative absolution). Likewise, Aquinas, who saw that justification of the sinner could come about through perfect contrition, felt that even such a person should not receive the Eucharist until he had been reconciled with the Church through absolution. However, the aspect of reconciliation with the Church falls by the wayside and is even forgotten in Trent.

b. **L.G. 11** does not link the effects of Penance (reconciliation with God and reconciliation with the Church), we can draw some conclusions from **LG 1**:

“By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God and the unity of all mankind. She is also an instrument for the achievement of such union and unity.” **Therefore, we can infer that the immediate reconciliation with the Church is that which calls, requires, produces and causes the effect of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God.** Hence, the entire Church prays for their conversion (LG 11) -- this prayer is done in and through Christ the head -- it is effective. The “Res et Sacramentum” then is the reconciliation of the sinner with the Church; it is the causative sign of the res tantum, the pardon from sin and the grace of reconciliation with God. In other words, having been reconciled to the Church, the recipient participates anew in the Spirit of grace of the Church which is the Holy Spirit whose infusion pardons and justifies him before God.

c. **The explicit connection** is in the 1974 Rite of Penance.

“The whole Church, as a priestly people, acts in different ways in work of reconciliation which has been entrusted to it by the Lord. Not only does the Church call sinners to repentance by preaching the Word of God, but it also intercedes for them and helps penitents with maternal care and solicitude to acknowledge and admit their sins and so to obtain the mercy of God who alone can forgive sins.” The ecclesial dimension of the sacrament is brought out in the words of absolution in the new rite. It states that the “essential” words is the indicative formula of Trent. However, the formula, “through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace. “ -- the rite states, “it underlines the ecclesial aspect of the sacrament because reconciliation with God is asked for and given through the ministry of the Church. “ (19)

**B. Justification apart from sacramental Penance .**

As we have seen, there has been a tradition (affirmed by Trent) that justification can take place as a result of perfect contrition. How does this grace come to man apart from the Church?

### 1. **Votum of sacrament:**

First of all, the tradition affirmed that the reconciliation does not takes place in perfect contrition apart from a **votum** for the celebration of the ecclesial sacrament. **In some way, perfect contrition is ordered toward the celebration of the sacrament and contains the votum for it.**

### 2. **Grace of Repentance is an ecclesial grace:**

The grace of Christ comes to us through the Church. In her ecclesial celebrations, the Church prays for the bestowal of grace in union with Christ, Her head, and Christ, by whose merits all grace is bestowed, pours forth that grace (infallibly so) into the members of his body. **The grace of repentance (and perfect contrition) is an ecclesial grace that is ordered to the celebration of Penance;** thus, a sign of perfect contrition is a votum for the ecclesial celebration which makes visible the grace of union already received.

**C. Contrition as a sign of conversion:** “The follower of Christ who has sinned but who has been moved by the Holy Spirit to come to the sacrament of Penance should above all be converted to God with his whole heart. The inner conversion of heart embraces sorrow for sin and the intent to lead a new life. It is expressed through confession made to the Church, due satisfaction and amendment of life. “ (Rite of Penance, 6)

### 1. **Contrition and Attrition:**

Contrition, according to Trent, includes a “detestation of sin and a firm resolve not to sin again.” Of course, this conversion is an adversion -- it is not just a turning away from sin but a turning toward God who calls us to Himself. Hence, conversion and contrition are graces from God. The turning to God is turning to Christ the Mediator. Turning to Christ is turning to the Church of which he is the Head. **Thus, contrition is a grace from God that leads us back to Himself through Christ in His Church.**

**a. In High Scholasticism:** the distinction between contrition and attrition was more than just one of degree but of **kind**; contrition was the fruit of a justifying grace whereas attrition is a compunction which is not given by grace.

**b. Trent,** in some ways reflected the thinking of Scotus concerning attrition and contrition. Attrition is imperfect contrition (**it’s a matter of degree, not a matter of kind**). Attrition is a genuine contrition that does flow from a love of God -- while it cannot justify the sinner, it prepares him to receive God’s grace in the sacrament of Penance. Thus, perfect contrition is motivated by a perfect love of God (God is loved for his own sake, not for the salvation he promises). Attrition is also motivated out of a love of God (God is loved for the salvation he brings). But how can you distinguish these two in practice? The man who feels contrition out of perfect love for God is unable to suppress his hope for God in the future. And the person with imperfect contrition who hopes for the future hopes for God Himself.

### 2. **Contrition and justification.**

**a. Perfect contrition** justifies even before absolution, because it is perfect love. This is clear from Trent and the tradition.

**b. Post-Tridentine** circles held that there was no justification without perfect contrition; imperfect contrition is an incipient love which is perfected through absolution.

**c. In both cases, what’s the point of absolution in terms of justification?** Does it bring it about or only (in some cases) the cause for perfecting love which brings about justification. Following Thomas Aquinas, many theologians hold that absolution does

not bring about the forgiveness of sins directly but transforms the incipient love contained in imperfect contrition into perfect love and thus reconciles the sinner with God.

#### **D. Satisfaction and the ongoing conversion of the sinner.**

“True conversion is complemented by acts of Penance or satisfaction for sins committed, by amendment of conduct and also by the reparation of injury. The kind and extent of the satisfaction should be suited to the personal condition of each penitent so that each one may restore the order which he disturbed and through the corresponding remedy be cured of the sickness which he suffered. Therefore it is necessary that the act of penance really be a remedy for sin and help to a renewal of life. Thus the penitent. . . again becomes part of the mystery of salvation and turns himself toward the future.” (Rite of Penance, 6,c)

##### **1. The performing of penance was always a part of the sacramental procedure.**

The acts of penance were regarded in the eastern Church as a part of the process of purification; in the western Church it was seen as a replacing of the eternal punishment that the sinner had merited. If there was a certain rigor in penitential practices in earlier days, it was because there was a certain doubt as to whether or not a person had sufficiently done enough penance. It was the teaching of Cyprian and Cyril of Alexandria that whatever penance was not sufficiently done here on earth would be made up in the hereafter. Adopting this view, the Church was able to moderate the rigors of penance.

**2.** Whether we see penance as satisfaction or purification, we need to **start with the merits of Christ** lest we think that in some way penance earns God’s forgiveness. As Trent clearly states, “we can do everything with the cooperation of Him who strengthens us, in whom we live, in whom we merit, in whom we make satisfaction.” The Christian’s work of purification, satisfaction and expiation is a participation in the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**3. Contrition for sin includes the will to make restitution** for the havoc it has worked on the sinner’s own life, in the life of the community and in the life of all creation. It is also a sign of willingness to be configured to Christ as the one who made satisfaction for sin.

##### **4. There is a difference in the role of satisfaction between Trent and the New Rite.**

In Trent, while recognizing the salutary benefits of doing penance, detaching the penitent from sin, making them more cautious and vigilant in the future, destroying evil habits by fostering virtues opposed to them, **Trent emphasizes the vindictory punishment of penance.** “Let them (confessors) keep in mind that the satisfaction imposed by them is meant not merely as a safeguard for the new life and as a remedy to weakness, but also as a vindictory punishment for former sins.” (DS 1692); the confession itself is seen as a tribunal. **In the new rite, the emphasis seems to be on the future, completing the process of conversion** and aiding toward the development of renewal.

#### **E. The devotional confession: Confession of venial sins in the process of conversion.**

**1. Concerning the confession of venial sins,** Trent states, “As regards venial sins, by which we are not excluded from the grace of God and into which we fall more frequently, it is right and profitable...to declare them in confession. ..yet, they may be omitted without guilt and may be expiated by many other remedies.”

**2. In the 1974 rite, the confession of venial sins is linked to the process of conversion:** “Moreover, frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise, but a serious striving to perfect the grace of baptism... In confession of this kind, penitents



who accuse themselves of venial faults should try to conform more closely to Christ and to follow the voice of the Spirit more attentively.” (Rite of Penance, 7b).

**F. Appendix:** The emphasis on the new rite for conversion can also be seen in the stress on the place of God’s Word in the celebration; through the hearing of God’s word, we are led to conversion.

## **Part Two: Anointing of the Sick:**

### **A. Scripture Witness:**

#### **a. OT:**

**1. Sickness always seen as a negative;** God is always contrary to sickness

#### **2. Different Interpretations:**

**a. oldest: sickness was due to one’s sins:** problem: sickness of the just

**b. second interpretation:** sickness also due to fidelity to the covenant

#### **c. Job: three-fold conception of sickness:**

1. sickness due to sin

2. sickness as a “trial” for the just

3. accepted as part of the mystery of one’s communion with God.

**d. Eschatological retribution:** sickness latter becomes associated with the belief that God is just and true and that he will remember his promises and destroy it forever.

**e.** Finally, the ides of **expiatory suffering** arose in the OT in that the one could intercede on behalf of the many through suffering (ie. pay their price).

#### **3. God’s inactivity vs. sickness:**

God combats sickness and suffering because they are evils. However, they are overcome **paradoxically** by means of their mediation.

#### **b. New Testament:**

##### **1. In Jesus’ life:**

1. Jesus cures and has mercy upon the sick. Such extraordinary cures were signs of the vindication of Jesus’ message and extraordinary grace. The point is that salvation is for all.

2. A command of the NT is to visit the sick (Mt. 25)

**2. James 5:13 ff:** In his original context, the anointing spoken of was as a help for those Christians who had sinned. It is interesting to note that there are three verbs used to reinforce the eschatological sense implied in the anointing:

1. save

2. raise them up

3. forgive them

### **B. Tradition:**

#### **a. First evidence: 416 AD in letter of Innocent I**

#### **b. Council of Florence: connected it with point of death**

**c. Council of Trent:** recognized extreme unction and emphasized that it should be administered as late as possible because it was a preparation for death. James 5:14-15 were cited as biblical foundation. [Although the decree also speaks of the use of it as help for the sick- this was later not emphasized].

#### **b. Vatican II: Radical change in praxis**

**Text: S. C. #73:**

“Extreme unction” which may also and more fittingly be called “Anointing of the Sick”, is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.”

1. Two names compliment each other
2. Extreme Unction was a reduction from anointing the sick because it was seen as preparatory for death (resurrection preparation). The Aid for the Sick is the more global idea.

**C. Rite Itself:**

- 1. The sacramental reality of Anointing has two principle effects :**
  - a. Aid of the HS to live sickness; configure one with the suffering Christ
  - b. Preparation for death.
- 2. Recipient:** either \*the dying or gravely sick and \*the elderly.
- 3. Three elements of sacramental action:**
  - a. presence of the community
  - b. prayers for the sick (in spiritual sense - forgiveness and corporeal sense)
  - c. anointing with oil