

SACRAMENT
OF
PENANCE

What does it mean??

❖ is a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through the priest's absolution to those who, with TRUE sorrow confess their sins and promise to satisfy for the same.

❖ The word *penance* derives from Old French and Latin *poenitentia*, both of which derive from the same root meaning repentance, the desire to be forgiven

What is it??

- ❖ This is the sacrament where the church celebrates the priest's ability (wearing the purple stole); on behalf of the community and Holy Spirit, to forgive the sins of those who have turned away from God.
- ❖ Through this the penitent receives:
 - Healing
 - Renewal

Who does it involve?

- It involves the priest and the penitent.
- The priest is in-charge of healing the penitent
- It is up to the person to realise they have done wrong and confess
- The priest forgives their sins and gives them penance to pray to God allowing God to forgive them

What does it involve?

- It involves understanding and sorrow
- Through the elements of reconciliation, the penitent must be aware of their sin and want to mend their relationship with God through penance
- The priest must be understanding of the penitent's sin and help them start from a fresh beginning.

Why is it important?

- The priest is able to counsel and encourage the penitent for the healing power of God
- It is an act of worship where we praise God for his Mercy
- It reminds us of sin and how God will forgive us no matter what the situation is
- It reminds us that we are loved by both God and the community



UNDERSTANDING RECONCILIATION

Question:

Why confess my sins? And why confess to a priest? Why not confess directly to God, since God has already forgiven me anyway?

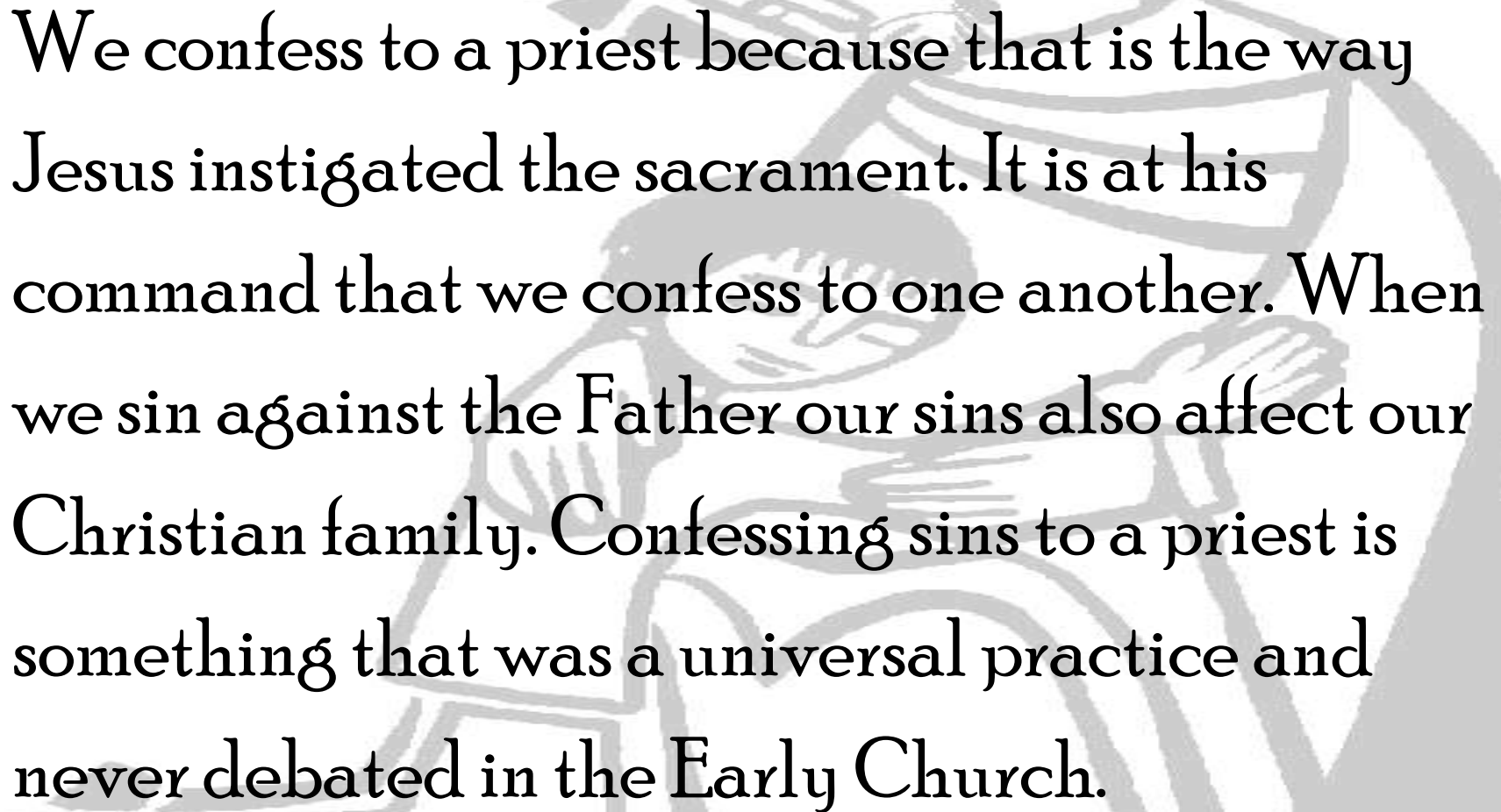
Answer:

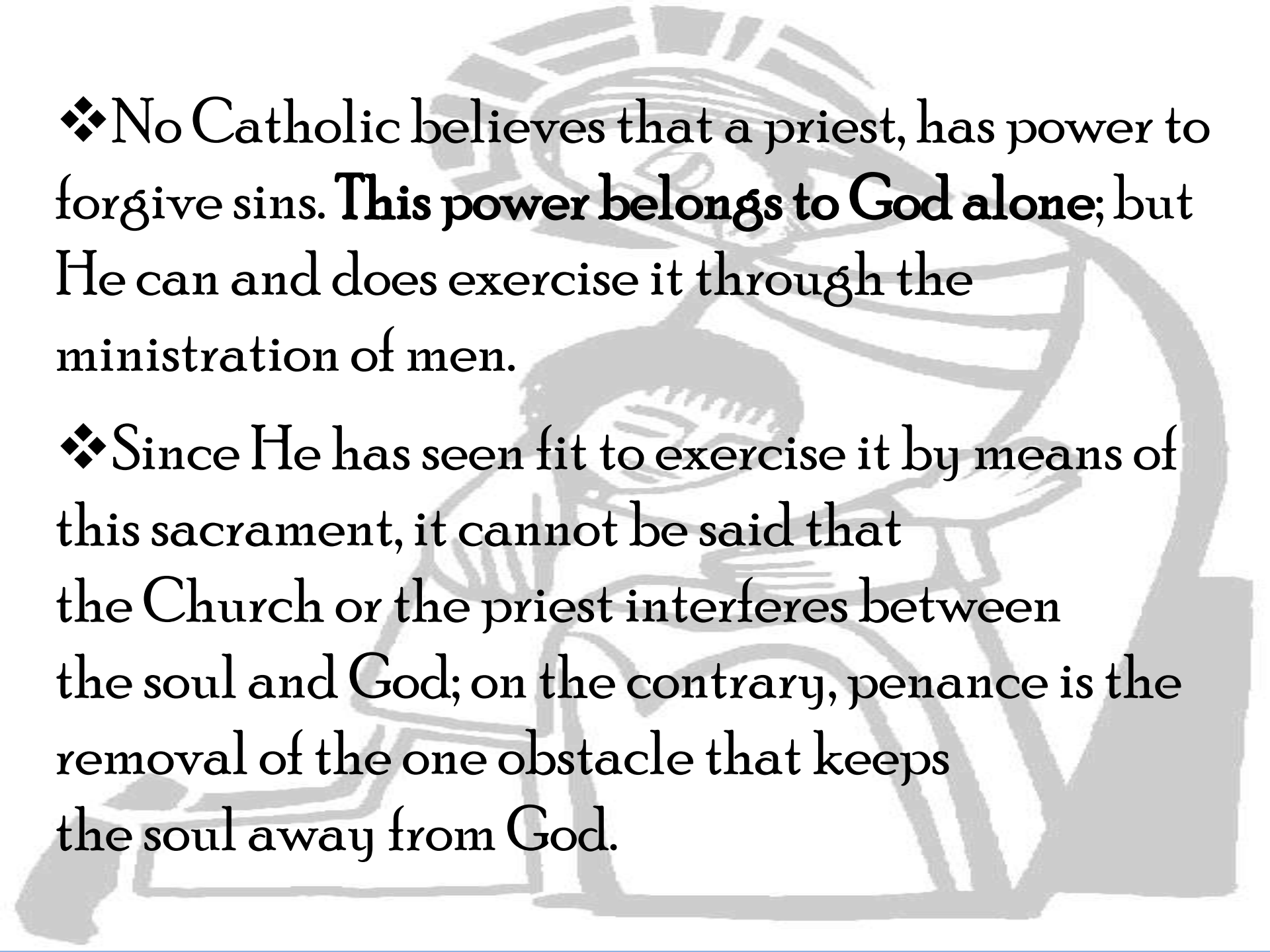
From God's point of view: *There is no reason.*

But from *our* point of view: *As human beings who do not live in our minds alone, we need to externalize bodily with words, signs and gestures what is in our minds and heart. We need to see, hear and feel forgiveness not just think about it.*

Answer:

We confess to a priest because that is the way Jesus instigated the sacrament. It is at his command that we confess to one another. When we sin against the Father our sins also affect our Christian family. Confessing sins to a priest is something that was a universal practice and never debated in the Early Church.





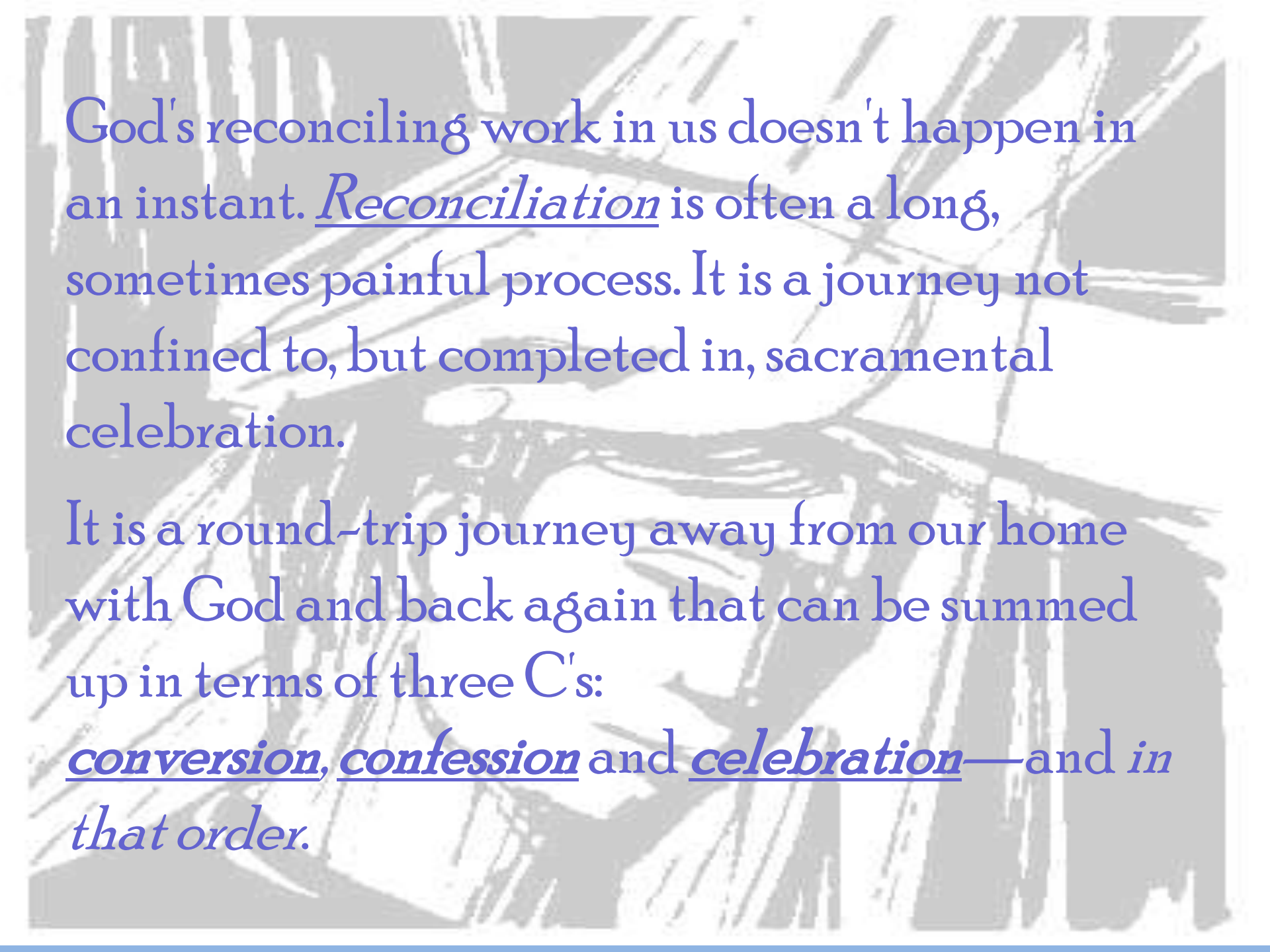
❖ No Catholic believes that a priest, has power to forgive sins. **This power belongs to God alone;** but He can and does exercise it through the ministration of men.

❖ Since He has seen fit to exercise it by means of this sacrament, it cannot be said that the Church or the priest interferes between the soul and God; on the contrary, penance is the removal of the one obstacle that keeps the soul away from God.

A Journey

Home to

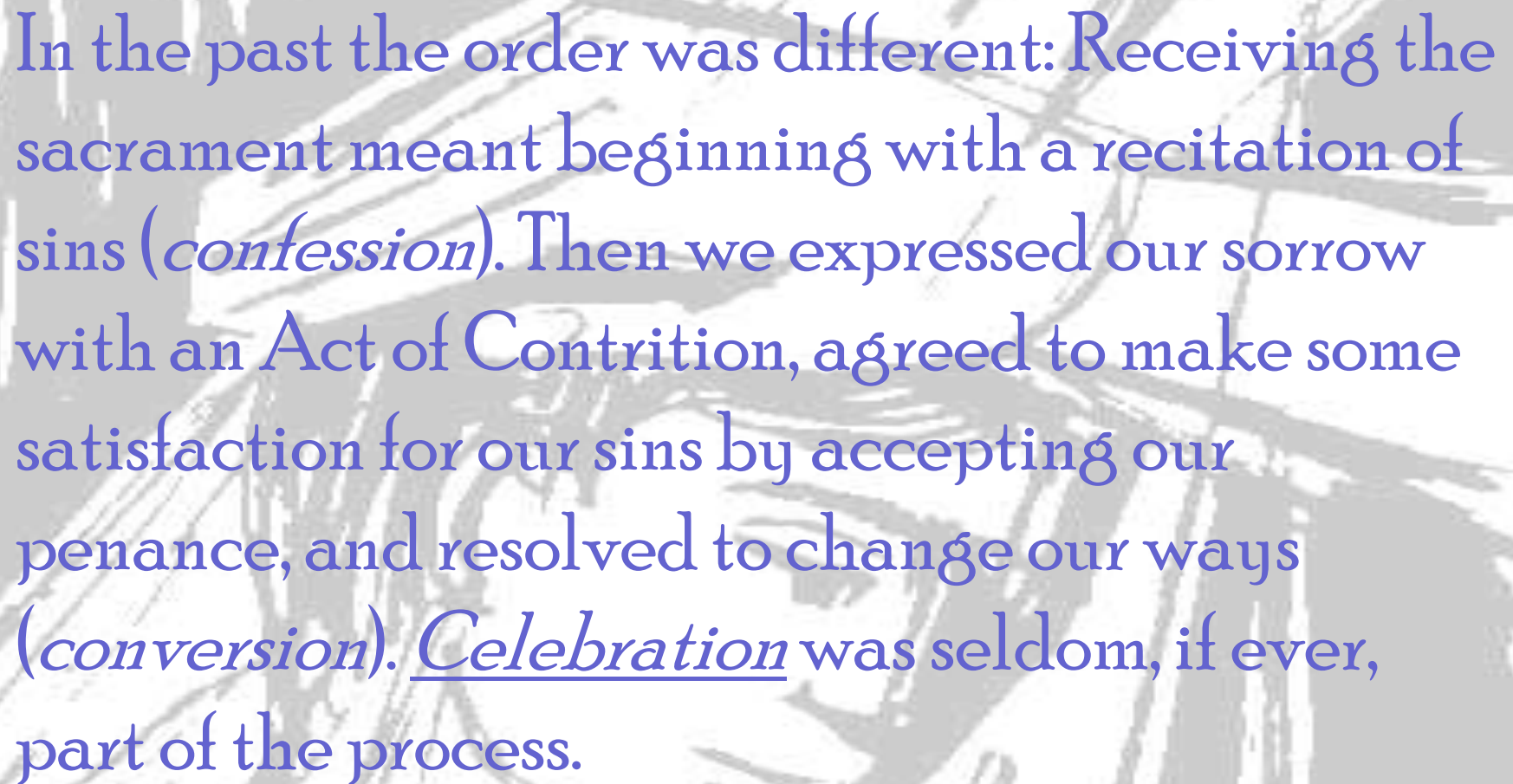
GOD



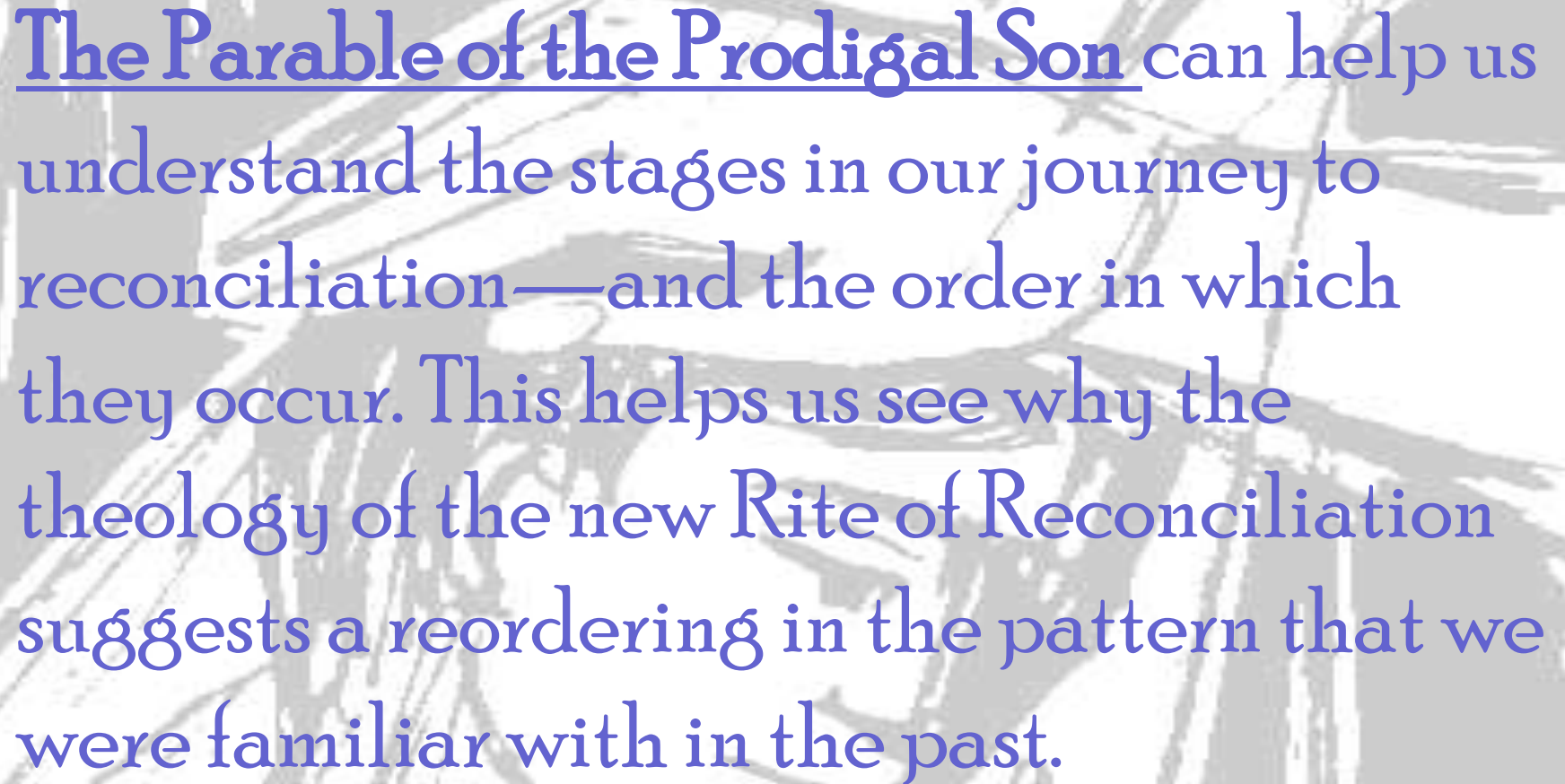
God's reconciling work in us doesn't happen in an instant. Reconciliation is often a long, sometimes painful process. It is a journey not confined to, but completed in, sacramental celebration.

It is a round-trip journey away from our home with God and back again that can be summed up in terms of three C's:

conversion, confession and celebration—and *in that order*.



In the past the order was different: Receiving the sacrament meant beginning with a recitation of sins (*confession*). Then we expressed our sorrow with an Act of Contrition, agreed to make some satisfaction for our sins by accepting our penance, and resolved to change our ways (*conversion*). *Celebration* was seldom, if ever, part of the process.



The Parable of the Prodigal Son can help us understand the stages in our journey to reconciliation—and the order in which they occur. This helps us see why the theology of the new Rite of Reconciliation suggests a reordering in the pattern that we were familiar with in the past.

CONVERSION: An on going process

The conversion process begins with a "coming to one's senses," with a realization that all is not right with our values and style of life. Prompted by a faith response to God's call, conversion initiates a desire for change. Change is the essence of conversion. *Shuv*, the Old Testament term for conversion, suggests a physical change of direction; *metanoia*, the term the New Testament uses, suggests an internal turnabout, a change of heart that is revealed in one's conduct.

CONFESSION: Externalizing what is within

Confession, one aspect of the sacrament which used to receive the greatest emphasis, is now seen as just one step in the total process. Confession of sin can only be sincere if it is preceded by the process of conversion. It is actually the external expression of the interior transformation that conversion has brought about in us. It is a much less significant aspect of the sacrament than we made it out to be in the past. This does not mean that confession is unimportant—only that it is not the essence of the sacrament.

Some things that
should be cleared up
to better understand
the Sacrament of
Reconciliation

ONE:

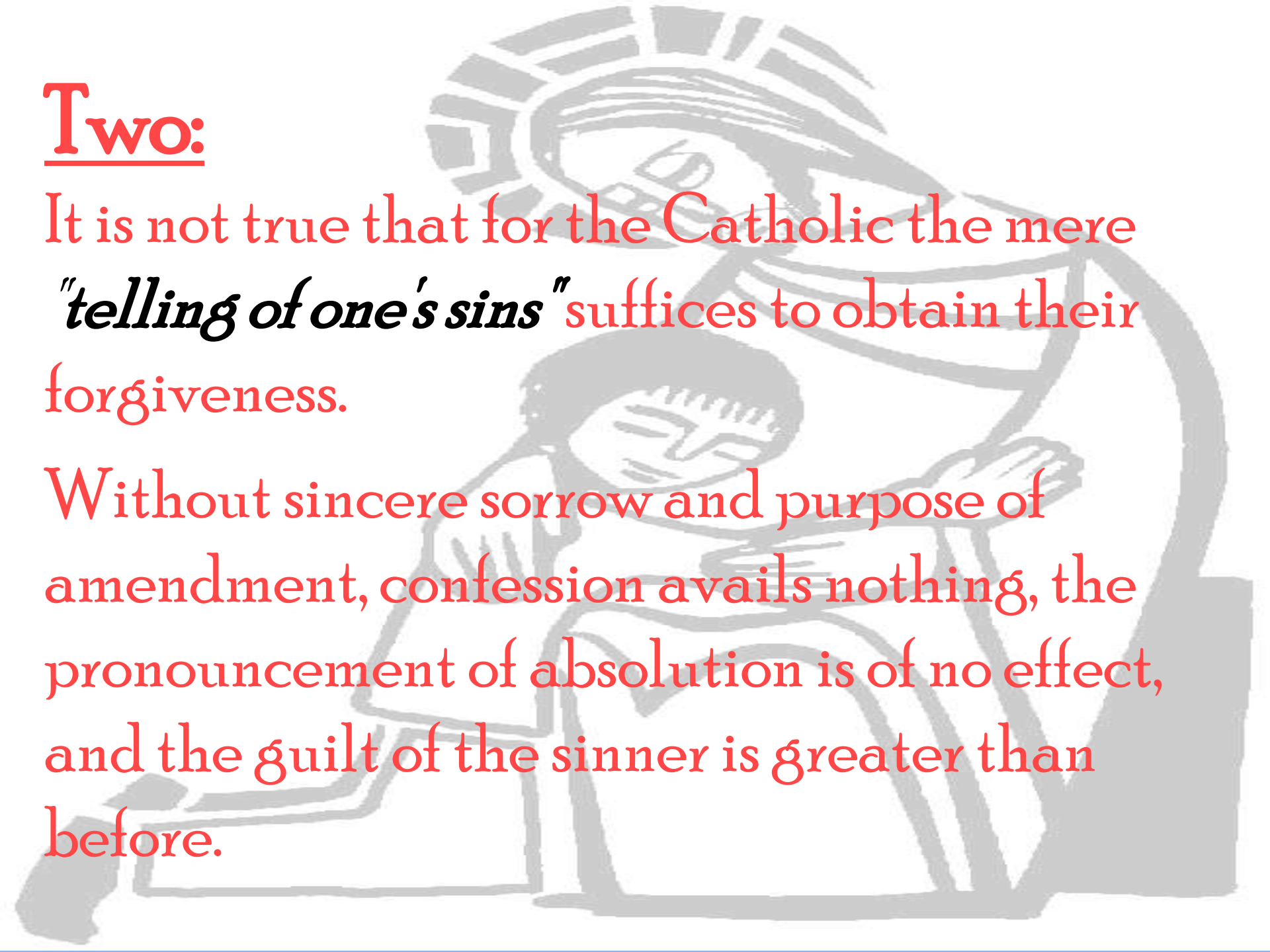
Penance is not a mere human invention devised by the Church to secure power over consciences or to relieve the emotional strain of troubled souls; it is the ordinary means appointed by Christ for the remission of sin.

Man indeed is free to obey or disobey, but once he has sinned, he must seek pardon not on conditions of his own choosing but on those which God has determined, and these for the Christian are embodied in the Sacrament of Penance

Two:

It is not true that for the Catholic the mere "*telling of one's sins*" suffices to obtain their forgiveness.

Without sincere sorrow and purpose of amendment, confession avails nothing, the pronouncement of absolution is of no effect, and the guilt of the sinner is greater than before.



Three:

While this sacrament as a dispensation of Divine mercy facilitates the pardoning of sin, it by no means renders sin less hateful or its consequences less dreadful to the Christian mind; much less does it imply permission to commit sin in the future.

In paying ordinary debts, for example, by monthly settlements, the intention of contracting new debts with the same creditor is perfectly legitimate; a similar intention on the part of him who confesses his sins would not only be wrong in itself but would nullify the sacrament and prevent the forgiveness of sins then and there confessed.

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