

WHAT IS SINNING?

In all cultures, even in the remotest tribes discovered by so-called civilised states, there are always local customs or laws to be obeyed. In our own country, we have a Parliament that creates laws for us to obey. Wherever there are laws set out by any society, there is always praise or rewards for those who obey them and punishments for those who don't.

God gave us laws to live by called the Ten Commandments. We can never know what's behind God's decisions, but if we all lived by these laws, there would never be any wars, killings, or thefts; only people loving God and everyone else. It would be an idyllic lifestyle.

We call disobeying God's laws SINNING, but what benefits and punishments go with them? The Catholic Church defines sins as Mortal or Venial. Mortal are those that are severe, such as killing and adultery, which we do willingly, knowing they offend God. They stain our immortal souls in such a way as to lose God's favour. If we die with our souls in this state, it will perish in hell for all eternity.

Venial sins also stain our souls but are not severe. These are ones such as lying to make people laugh or ones that you don't realise are sins or do not willingly do. If your soul is only stained with venial sins, your reward, when you die, is life for your soul in heaven with God for all eternity.

Our very short lives here on earth are nothing compared with life in heaven for all eternity, so be aware of sinning. Make sure your soul is free from mortal sins at all times, because you never know when you will die.

A great way of ensuring this is to go to the sacrament of reconciliation (Confession) as often as possible. It's the only sure way we have of knowing that God has forgiven our sins, and our souls are free from them.

When we only go to confession once or twice a year, we tend to recognise our sins just before going to this sacrament. When we go regularly, say every 2, 3 or 4 weeks, we recognise we are sinning as we start to commit them, allowing us to stop. This is just one great reason for going to confession regularly.

**DON'T LOSE YOUR ETERNAL
SOUL BY COMMITTING SINS;
IT'S YOUR EVERLASTING
AND DEVASTATING LOSS.**

Sinning is such a devastating thing that the mission of the Catholic Church is to follow the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ who in various ways said he'd come to save sinners.

We are told that where heaven is concerned:

*'the eye has not seen,
nor has the ear heard
the wonders that God
has prepared for
those who love him'.*

The Church wants us all to get to heaven, but we must earn it. To do so, our immortal soul must be 'In Favour With God' when we die, and the strategies taught by the Catholic Church are all aimed at achieving this

The Church follows what Jesus Christ told us to do. He explained what was wanted and how it can all be achieved. We should worship God alone, love Him and our neighbours as ourselves. If we do this, our souls will be in favour with God when we die.

It's all so simple, but our free will, a gift from God, means that we have the problem of DESIRE. It is this that causes us to fail in achieving God's promise. There is also Satan at work, endlessly trying to get us to desire things that cause us to sin.

Desire causes most of man's problems, such as when we desire, power and riches, causing theft, avarice, slander, indecency, malice and many other things. Desire is not wrong, it's when we use it at the expense and pain of others.

To overcome these dreadful desires and to stop us sinning, the Church has instituted particular ways of living, of praying, using special practices (Sacraments) and of actually worshiping God. Practising these will ensure that our souls are in favour with God when we die.

The main ones are:

1. **LOVE GOD** with our whole heart, mind and body and our neighbour as ourselves.
2. **PRAYING** daily to God.
3. **RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS**, especially Baptism, Penance and Holy Eucharist.
4. **GOING TO MASS** at least once a week.
5. **Supporting MISSIONARY SERVICES.**

There are many others, all designed to save sinners and allow them to achieve God's great promise, but the five above are very effective ones.

Don't lose sight of the endless eternity. If Satan offered you life until the end of time, with no medical problems and being the richest on earth, remember, until the 'end of time', is nothing in terms of length when it's compared with 'eternity in heaven' promised by God for the souls of those who die without sin.

Do not let sinning, during your **tiny lifetime**, destroy your **eternal** soul by making sure it resides in hell for all eternity.

DO WHAT THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES,
MAKING SURE YOUR SOUL
GAINS GOD'S GREAT PROMISE
TO LIVE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN
FOR ALL ETERNITY.