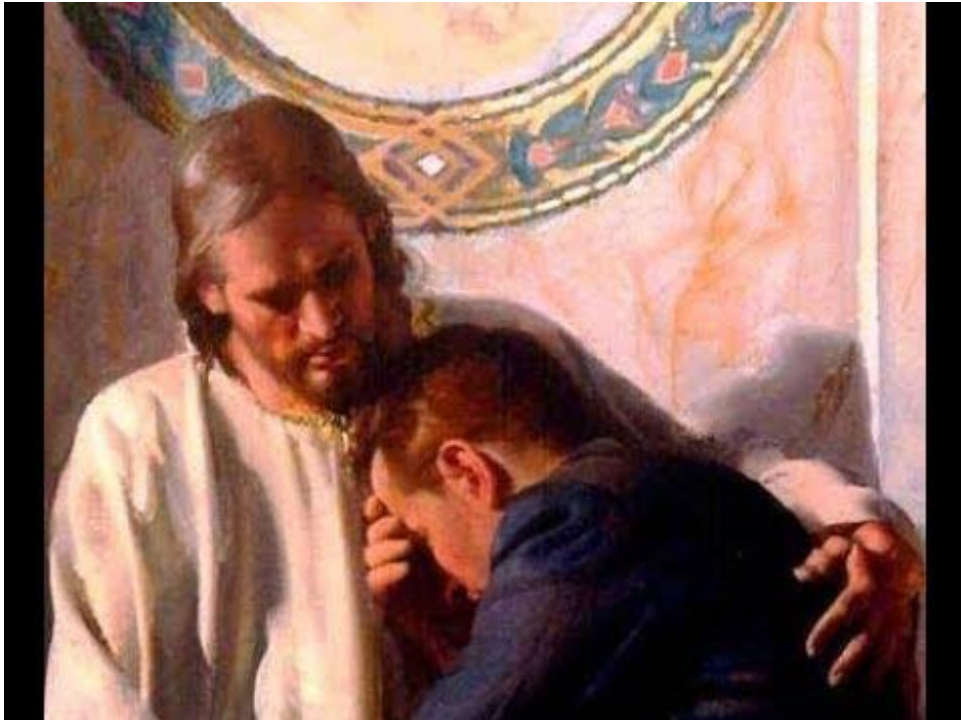


## The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

### - dementia friendly (resource for priests)

For many people, the Rite of private Confession to a priest in a BOX is something they do not choose anymore. Many of us grew over time to really dread confession. For those with Dementia and their Carer/s a Service of Reconciliation with the Parish Community with the opportunity for individual confession to a priest/s gives us a greater sense of our responsibilities to one another. We discover the meaning of sin and repentance. We know that at the beginning of every Mass the priest prays the Penitential Rite: *'May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.'*

**Do we believe what we pray that our sins are forgiven?**



### **Jesus who HEALED and TOUCHED PEOPLE:**

Jesus caught the eye of people who needed healing.

'My daughter, your faith has restored you to health; go in peace'.

'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs:'

'Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you'.

'When Jesus saw her he called her over and said: 'Woman you are rid of your infirmity' and he laid his hands on her. And at once she straightened up and she glorified God, Finding and carrying home the lost sheep. '

**IT IS A SACRAMENT OF PEACE which is a SIGN of GOD'S LOVE**

Through Baptism we have become a part of the Extra-ordinary Mystery of living and dying. We gradually discover that GOD is WITH ME in the HERE and NOW - **AND GOD LOVES ME! - JUST AS I AM.** God is not 'out there' but here with me. The gift of God in THIS SACRAMENT IS PEACE freely given - a PEACE that the world cannot know or give.

**It IS A SACRAMENT OF MAKING PEACE.** If we are at peace with our selves we can understand more fully how other people feel. God gives us the gift of being PEACE-MAKERS when misunderstandings and alienation overcome us. When we feel 'at rock bottom' the gift of this sacrament is to raise our spirits and find strength and hope for the future.

**IT IS A SACRAMENT OF HEALING:** Do you believe that God can heal your body and mind when it is sick? Prayers for healing have two effects – They help us recognise the healing power as a gift from God and encourage us to celebrate that healing.

**There is so much that we are discovering about the need for healing:**

*'The healing activity of God is found in today's language:  
in the laboratory that searches for cures  
in the hospital that serves the sick  
in the psychologist who counsels towards wellness  
in the nursing staff that treat the patient  
in the spiritual guide who seeks meaning with the ill, in the Carer/s who dedicates their life's energy to a loved one on a daily basis  
in the neighbour who reaches out in support to say; 'You are not alone',  
in the helplessness of family members struggling to make sense of slowly losing a loved one.'*

*Adapted from: Bill Huebsch ' Rethinking Sacraments'.*

**LOOKING AT THE DEMENTIA and the EUCHARIST Handout it is obvious that the Different Approaches and Practical Suggestions cover everything that would be appropriate for Reconciliation/ Confession. WITH MEMORY LOSS THERE CANNOT BE A CONFESSION OF SIN.** It is known for someone to tell about other people's sins but not related to themselves!

**There is a need for visible, tangible, audible signs of God's Love when visiting home /s or attending a Service of Reconciliation.**

The tone of our voice when first meeting. Attend to N.... straight away. Can be disturbing if Priest chats to Carer or other family members and does not acknowledge N..... Ensure you can hear and understand that you have come to see N....

Find a place to sit at the same level as N....so you can be seen. Be aware of the mood -responses: disturbed/ at peace/ irritable/ anxious/ happy/ talkative/ silent.....

HELLO N..... my name is Father .... Good morning! Something special is happening for us today! I am so pleased to be here with you. Can you see me/ hear me? I will sit here / stay with you. We will say : Our Father.....slowly....

**WORDS OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION:**

Peace be with you N...

Do not be afraid N....

Jesus says: 'I am with you'.

N..... I have called you by your name. You are mine.

You are very special to me N.. and I love you.

N... I love you with an everlasting love. Jesus said: I will give you strength and hope for you are precious to me.

N... Be at peace....and know you are special in God's eyes.

**Prayer:** God of Peace, come to us and heal us. Give us your strength and protection. We ask this in the name of Jesus and Mary.

**Audible:** A very short thought from the Gospel might help recall: e.g. How Jesus healed the man born blind, went to a wedding party with his mother and friends, healed the woman who was sick, had a last supper with his friends, loved to fish on the lake.

**Tangible:** If appropriate with your thumb, sign a cross on N..'s Forehead. .... saying: N... In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, may you find peace and love. Amen.

**Visible:** See the beauty of a flower, painting, photos of family etc.

If appropriate: Gently hold N's ... hand/ s (touch can be healing).

Maybe say the Our Father, a Hail Mary....hum or sing a familiar hymn e.g. Ave, Ave, Maria, or discover what music, hymns N would like.. e.g. Away in a Manger even though it may be summer- time...Gentle clapping or tapping is helpful.

Invite the carer/ friend to join with you.....especially if N... is having Holy Communion at this time. Offer each other the Sign of Peace / Hug if appropriate. Pray for those who care and love N....Amen.