

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY/KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at *The University of Western Ontario*
Winter/Spring - 2016

Sacramental Theology 5542B
The Art of the Confessor
Mondays : 9:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
St. Peter's Seminary – Reconciliation Classroom

Professor: Father Michael Prieur, B.A., B.Th., S.T.L., S.T.D.
Office Hours by appointment (519-432-1824, x. 223) (<mprieur@uwo.ca>)

A. Course Description

A preparation for students to be ministers of the Sacrament of Penance. Insights from the great confessors of the Christian tradition along with specific pastoral material from moral/sacramental theology and canon law. Applications and role playing to contemporary conditions in celebrating reconciliation, catechetical preparation programs and diocesan practice.

B. Goals

This course will allow the student to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge:

1. To be familiar with some of the teachings of the great spiritual guides in the Christian tradition regarding bringing understanding and healing to those dealing with their human situations of sin and guilt;
2. To understand the various models used in the Christian tradition in describing how confessors are to minister to those coming to them for healing and mercy;
3. To know the liturgical requirements for celebrating the various rites dealing with sacramental forgiveness and healing;
4. To know the appropriate canonical instructions pertinent to the role of the confessor;
5. To know the various categories of penitents coming for healing and sacramental forgiveness and where to turn when further expertise may be required in dealing with these individuals;
6. To know the various themes covered in other areas of moral theology or spiritual theology which impact on someone coming to confession, i.e., in fundamental moral theology including conversion, sin, and guilt; in marriage and sexuality such as struggles in living out one's commitment in love and fidelity, in relating to self and others in a chaste and Christian manner; in justice, areas of commutative justice, social justice, and respect for the environment; also includes healing of memories, deliverance, etc.
7. To know the various pastoral solutions for difficult situations;

Skills:

1. To be able to assess individual penitents according to their specific needs;
2. To be able to apply adequate, prudential and pastoral discernment to these needs in order to bring them "mercy-in-truth" through various role-playing situations;
3. To be able to use the various liturgical requirements for celebrating sacramental reconciliation in a prayerful and sensitive manner in both individual and communal settings;

4. To be able to apply canon law to specific situations with a balance between respect for the law and respect for the person in his or her circumstances;
5. To be able to encourage Catholics to see the deep value of sacramental reconciliation, especially that of the individual celebration of the sacrament;
6. To be able to integrate all the areas of his theological studies pertinent to individuals coming to confession so that these concepts and distinctions can be interwoven in sound, balanced and pastoral application for the good of each person;

Attitudes:

1. To enable the student to appreciate how the paschal mystery underpins all conversion and reconciliation and in this way to be able to take on the attitude of Christ the redeemer and healer in his celebration of this sacrament.
2. To engender the spirit of compassion and love for the sinner and those struggling to live their Christian lives amidst all the temptations of the world today;
3. To foster a deep personal love and regular practice of sacramental reconciliation so that he will appreciate the maxim “Good penitent, good confessor”;
4. To encourage a good liturgical sense and practice in the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation;
5. To develop a yearning to continue to read and to discover fresh approaches to the various categories of people coming for sacramental healing and consolation;
6. In all of this to respect the ultimate purpose of canonical law, namely “the salvation of souls, which is always the supreme law of the church” (Canon # 1752);

C. Assessment

1. The main assignment of this course is to **PRAY**. Pray to be a good confessor. Pray for your future penitents. Pray to be full of mercy and compassion **TODAY**. Pray to know **JESUS CHRIST** more and more so that you can be a true reconciler of his. Pray to allow your own soul to be experiencing new **CONVERSIONS** and new **INSIGHTS** in following the Way of the Lord. And finally, pray that your own celebrations of this great sacrament will always be **HUMBLE, REGULAR AND FREQUENT**.
2. The second learning experience will be to **READ and PONDER**. As we go through the course I will, as usual, make many recommendations for reading as well as give out many good handouts. I will try to indicate what will be most useful for you as a future confessor. Try to give preference to these sources.
3. The third suggestion that many students have found helpful is to create a personal **HANDBOOK FOR CONFESSORS**. This can contain many practical helps for the hearing of confessions that can be useful, especially during the first year or so in ministry. As you can see, the headings of the Handbook parallel our course, so your handbook can be, in effect, your own class notes in practical, pithy form! Instructions for this handbook will be given out in class.
4. The final expectation is that each member of the class do an **interview**. I suggest that you speak with a priest to come up with a small page of **practical tips** regarding how to be a better confessor in the following areas. Areas of concern will be handed out in class for this interview.
5. A two-hour **oral exam for Faculties** will be held at the end of the course conducted by a board of two faculty members appointed by the course instructor with two students.
6. **Marks:** Handbook for Confessors 40

	3
Interview	10
Faculties Exam	<u>50</u>
	100

D. Readings or Textbooks:

A. Required:

- *The Code of Canon Law*, 1983
- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 2001
- Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum for Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life*, Vatican City, 1997.
- *Rituale Romanum, Ordo Paenitentiae*, Rome, 1974; (USCCB updated 2010)
- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook, Revised and Expanded Edition*, N.Y., Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press, 2010.

B. Recommended:

- Ashley, Benedict, O.P., *Living the Truth in Love – A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology*, N.Y., Alba House, 1996, pp. 271-92; 323-340; (for justice section)
- Cuschieri, Andrew, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation – A Theological and Canonical Treatise*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1992;
- Peschke, Karl H., S.V.D., *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, Alcester, C. Goodliffe Neale, 1985 (revised ed.), Vol. II, 513-73 (justice section)
- Woodgate, Fr. Michael, *A Priest's Guide to Hearing Confessions*, London, Catholic Truth Truth Society, 2008.

E. Structure of the Course

A. Introduction to the course

1. Course outlines, assignments, bibliographies, directions;
2. Historical update: from the *Ordo Paenitentiae* (1974) to the 2000s: Key trends

B. The Art of the Confessor: “*Ars artium est regimen animarum*” (St. Gregory the Great)

1. The Minister of Reconciliation: Some Historical Models (Studzinski)
2. The Sacramental Dialogue between Priest and Penitent: basic principles (Stasiak; Woodgate)
3. The Art of the Confessor: Past and Present: (tradition & JP II; Woodgate)

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| a. roles: | i. Spiritual Father |
| | ii. Physician |
| | iii. Teacher |
| | iv. Judge |
| b. virtues: | i. Goodness and holiness |
| | ii. Knowledge |
| | iii. Meticulous respect for secrecy |
| | iv. Prudence: the art of discerning/questioning, etc. |

4. "Confessional Manners": "Do's and Don't's";
5. Reconciliation in Art: some insights from the great artists

C. Celebrating Sacramental Reconciliation: Liturgical practice

1. The setting for sacramental reconciliation
2. The order for reconciling individual penitents
3. The order for reconciling individual penitents in a communal setting
Excursus: Celebrations and the "Root Sin"
4. Reconciling penitents using general absolution: JP II, *Misericordia Dei* (2002)
5. The question of boundaries in celebrating reconciliation

D. Canonical aspects for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Fr. Paul Baillargeon: 9 hrs)

1. The notion of jurisdiction; ordinary and delegated
2. Mode of delegation and extent of faculties; diocesan faculties
3. Cessation of faculties
4. Faculties in danger of death
5. Common error
7. The seal of confession
8. Abuses and their penalties; solicitation
9. Reconciliation and difficult marital situations: internal forum solutions
10. Reconciliation and non-Catholics: Canon 844
11. Reconciliation and the RCIA; pastoral practice
12. Priests and sexual abuse: Canonical/Pastoral notes
13. John Paul II, *Motu Proprio*, "*Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, Protection of the Sacraments", 2001. (regarding treatment of sexual abuse cases)
14. General Absolution: John Paul II, *Misericordia Dei*, 2002: Canonical aspects

E. The Penitent: Canonical/Pastoral Aspects

1. Personal dispositions
2. The acts of the penitent: confession, contrition, satisfaction;
– specific kinds of "penances" and sources for these
3. Certain obligations: integrity, annual confession ("Easter duty"), etc.
4. Interpreters; choice of a confessor
5. Temptation: theology and pastoral tips for penitents
5. General confession
6. Confession of devotion: pastoral helps

F. Specific Groups of Penitents and Pastoral Notes:

1. scrupulosity
2. children and teenagers (especially those in our Catholic and "pluralistic" high schools)
3. the penitent who is "present in body but absent in spirit"
4. the penitent in need of counselling or psychotherapy
5. "this isn't a sin but..."

6. the penitent returning after a long absence
7. married people
8. single people;
9. the elderly;
10. religious, seminarians, priests, bishops
11. the sick and the dying
12. *occasionarii, habituarii, recidivi*
13. the hearing-impaired
14. foreign languages

G. Specific Areas of Pastoral Concern for Sacramental Reconciliation

1. Justice and Rights: principles, restitution, etc. (Peschke; Ashley)
2. Human sexuality and pastoral theology in the confessional:
 - a. masturbation
 - b. illicit sexual activity outside marriage
 - c. illicit sexual activity within marriage
 - d. dealing with homosexual individuals
 - e. pornographic addiction
3. Difficult marriage situations:
 - a. family planning and contraception
 - b. internal forum solution (also see Canon Law)
 - c. pastoral handling of abortion
4. Dealing with abuse (see Pastoral Counselling and Canon Law)
5. Truth and integrity: calumny, detraction, slander
6. The healing of memories, deliverance and sacramental reconciliation
7. AA and "the fifth step"
8. Other addictions: e.g. gambling
9. Dealing with spiritual evil: healing of memories, deliverance, exorcism.

F. University Regulations and Support Services

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under the licence to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>."

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

Submission of Assignments: It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so

that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Selection and Registration of Courses: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Services for Students with Disabilities at King's is available at

<http://www.Kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-department/dean-of-students/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see specifically:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The web site for Academic Services at King's University College is

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>

These services are not meant to replace those offered at the Seminary, but may be beneficial to our students after consultation with the appropriate instructors, administrators, and formators.

G. Select Bibliography #1

A. Official Texts

1. *Rituale Romanum, Ordo Paenitentiae*, Rome, 1974; (English Text: *The Rite of Penance*, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2010).
2. *The Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, CCCB, 1983;
3. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Ottawa, CCCB, Revised 1999, #1420-98;
4. Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life*, Vatican City, Feb. 12, 1997; (published in Kurt Stasiak, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook*, N.Y., Paulist, 2010 revised)

B. Some Further References (annotated):

- Ashley, Benedict, O.P., *Living the Truth in Love--A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology*, N.Y., Alba House, 1996, pp. 271-92; 323-340; (good update on commutative justice)
- Chappell, Arthur Barker, *Regular Confession: An Exercise in Sacramental Spirituality*, N.Y., Peter Lang, 1992, 202pp.;
(Could be a good little textbook, but \$96.00 is too much! Excellent bibliography for this subject , pp. 181-96;)
- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 2001
(Good commentary on the rite of penance in Ch. 3 and 4)
- Cuschieri, Andrew, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation--A Theological and Canonical Treatise*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1992: (a goldmine of sources concerning the classical and canonical sources for this sacrament; good for technical aspects;)
- Brennan, Patrick J., *Guidelines for Contemporary Catholics: Penance and Reconciliation*, Thomas More Press, 1986;
- *Chicago Studies*, Vol. 34, no. 2(August, 1995):
 - Rev. Thomas Ventura, "Old Wine in New Wineskins", 111-21 (with remarks by Cardinal Bernardin);
 - Kenin B. Osborne, O.S.B., "The Ambiguity of Communal Penance", 123-35;
 - Ladislav Örsy, S.J., "The Revival of the Sacrament of Penance: A Proposal", 136-43;
 - Owen E. Cummings, "Reconciliation and Penance: Some Needed Distinctions", 145-7;
 - Donald Headley, "Sin and Reconciliation in the Consciousness of Christians", 158-71;
- Halligan, Nicholas, OP, *The Sacraments and Their Celebration*, N.Y., Alba House, 1986, pp. 81-120; (good canonical points; can be on the legalistic side at times)
- Häring, Bernard, C.Ss.R., *Shalom:Peace, The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, N.Y., Image, 1969; (tremendously pastoral; needs updating, but much solid material)
- John Paul II, *The Sacrament of Penance: Dogmatic, Moral and Canonical Aspects*, edited by the Apostolic Penitentiary, Rome; (I have not yet been able to get this source. It is referred to in an address of the Pope to Roman Confessors, "Treat sinners with understanding", *L'Osservatore Romano*, n. 14--7 April, 1993, p. 3(weekly edition); see also *The Pope Speaks*, TBS 88:261-265, S-O 1993)
- Kennedy, Robert, ed., *Reconciliation: the Continuing Agenda*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1987, pp. 131-284; (updates *Ordo Paenitentiae* of 1973)
- Morneau, Robert F., *Reconciliation*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 2007; (a literary and prayer-filled treasure trove)
- Peschke, Karl H., S.V.D. *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, Alcester, C. Goodliffe Neale, 1985(revised ed.), Vol. II, pp. 513-573 for intensive treatment on justice and restitution; and 574-614 for truth, fidelity and honour;

- "Reconciliation" in *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, Vol. 26, no. 135(Winter, 1993): good articles:
 - questions regarding sacramental reconciliation;
 - the human need for reconciliation;
 - reconciliation and the life of the Church;
 - the gospel of reconciliation;
 - justice, injustice and the Sunday worship;
 - liturgy, justice and daily life.
- Scalone, Jonathon M., "Reconciliation: Rite II Revisited", *Liturgy*, (90:Feb.-March, 1994), 14-5; (a parish experience with the "root sin" concept)
- Shaw, Russell, *Why We Need Confession*, Princeton, N.J., Sceptre Publishers, 1985
(Solid, popular approach to pastoral questions regarding confession)
- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook*, N.Y., Paulist, 1999
(lots of good practical tips which we will allude to in the course)
- Vaillancourt, Raymond, "La Pénitence dans l'Éxistence Contemporaine", *Études Canadiennes en Liturgie*, Année 1993, n. 5; (good french bibliography: pp. 97-8)
- Weinandy, Thomas, O.F.M. CAP., *Sacrament of Mercy--A Spiritual & Practical Guide to Confession*, Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 1997;
(short history of P. and many scriptural meditations to help to go to confession)

C. Further Materials on Sacramental Reconciliation:

- Carrubba, Sandra J., "Why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is Meaningful Today", *Our Family* January, 1995, 16-18;
- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 2001
(Solid theological commentary and good comments on the *Ordo Paenitentiae*)
- Forest, Jim, *I Confess-- Doorway to Forgiveness*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2002;
(Good biblical reflections from and Eastern Orthodox perspective)
- Gestrich, Christof, *The Return of Splendor in the World--The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Forgiveness*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 1989 (reprinted 1997);
(reformulates doctrine of sin and forgiveness in light of feminist theology, liberation theology, and economic ethics;)
- Gilbert, Binford W., *The Pastoral Care of Depression--A Guidebook*, N.Y., Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998; (sections dealing with "The Pastor: Unique Caregiver" and "The Minister's Own Mental Health" are helpful for our course;)
- Grace, Madeleine, "The forgotten sacrament: The life-giving power of Confession needs to be proclaimed", *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Vol. XCV, no. 5(Feb. 1995), 54-8;
- Kelly, Liam, "Reconciliation" in *Sacraments Revisited--What Do they Mean Today?*, N.Y., Paulist,

1998, 97-117; (good popular summary of Penance)

- Kennedy, Robert J., ed., *Reconciling Embrace--Foundations for the Future of Sacramental Reconciliation*, Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 1998; (good essays on alienation, history of P., anthropological crises, etc.)
- Linn, Dennis, Linn, Sheila Fabricant, Linn, Matthew, S.J., *Don't Forgive Too Soon--Extending Two Hands That Heal*, N.Y., Paulist, 1996; (good material integrating the five stages of death and dying, healing processes, etc.)
- McCarrick, Bishop Theodore, "Pardon and Peace", *Origins*, Vol. 25, no. 38(March 14, 1996), 637-43;
- McGowan, Phelim, SDB, *Welcome Home – A Prayerful Reflection on the Sacrament of Reconciliation*, & McCarthy, Flor, *Services of Reconciliation*, Dublin, Ireland, Betaprint, 2001; (very practical and wonderfully illustrated)
- Monbourquette, John, *How to Forgive – A Step-by-Step Guide*, Ottawa, Novalis, 2000. (An excellent and practical “How-to” manual)
- Sanford, Agnes, *The Healing Light*, N.Y., Ballantine Books, 1983 (orig. 1947); (good insights on the healing of emotions, the healing power or forgiveness, etc.)
- Schlenker, Richard J., "Are We Missing the Boat on Reconciliation?", *America*, Feb. 17, 1996, 22-24; (I agree with his stress on the communal dimension of Penance, but I think words of encouragement and spiritual direction are very much needed and desired in a world of isolation and depersonalization.)
- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook – Revised and Expanded Edition*, N.Y./Mahwah, N.J., Paulist, 2010.
- Wintz, Jack, O.F.M., "Guilt--A Tool for Christian Growth", *Catholic Update*, Feb. 1986;
- Woods, Walter J., "Faith and Repentance in a European Church", in *Walking With Faith--New Perspectives on the Sources and Shaping of Catholic Moral Life*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1998, 187-232; (extensive summary of history and development of the sacrament of reconciliation)

Bibliography # 2: Classical and Timeless Works

A. Classical Works

- Borromeo, St. Charles, *Les Instructions aux Confesseurs*
- Francis of Sales, St., *Avis de S. François de Sales aux Confesseurs*;
- , “On confession”, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1959, 79-81

- Gaume, Abbé Jean Joseph, *Manuel des Confesseurs*;
- John of the Cross, St., *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Washington, D.C., ICS Publications, 1973 ed., 28-9; 621-34;
- Leonard of Port Maurice, Blessed, *Le Prêtre Sanctifié*;
-----, *Les Avertissements aux Confesseurs*;
-----, *Un Traité de la Confession Générale*
- Liguori, St. Alphonsus, *Praxis Confessarii*; (Translated into English: D. Lowery, C.Ss.R., ed., *Guide for Confessors*, Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, N.Y., 1978;
-----, “The Sacrament of Penance” in *Dignity and Duties of the Priest or Selva*, ed. By Rev. Eugene Grimm, Brooklyn, N.Y., The Redemptorist Fathers, 1927, 271-88;
- Teresa of Avila, St., *The Way of Perfection*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1964, 60-2;
- Xavier, St. Francis, *Avis de S. François Xavier aux Confesseurs*;

B. Further works:

- Berggren, Eric, *The Psychology of Confession*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1975;
- Broccolo, F. E., “Ten Characteristics of the Presidential Style of a Good Confessor”, Liturgy Training Program, Archdiocese of Chicago, 1974;
- Fink, Peter, S.J., ed., *Alternative Futures for Worship: Vol. 4: Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1987;
- Häring, Bernard, C.Ss.R., *Shalom: Peace, The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1969;
- Harris, Clifford, *On Hearing Confessions*, London, Faith Press, n.d.
- Kelly, Gerald, *The Good Confessor*, N.Y., Sentinel Press, 1951;
- Studzinski, Raymond, OSB, “The Minister of Reconciliation: Some Historical Models”, in Nathan Mitchell, OSB, *The Rite of Penance: Commentaries, Background and Directions*, Washington, D.C., The Liturgical Conference, 1978, 58ff.

A Minister of Mercy

As a steward of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, the priest fulfills the command given by Christ to the Apostles after his Resurrection: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of

any, they are retained" (*Jn 20:22-23*). The priest is the witness and instrument of divine mercy! How important in his life is the ministry of the confessional! It is in the confessional that *his spiritual fatherhood* is realized in the fullest way. It is in the confessional that every priest becomes a witness of the great miracles which divine mercy works in souls which receive the grace of conversion. It is necessary, however, that every priest at the service of his brothers and sisters in the confessional should experience this same divine mercy by going to confession himself and by receiving spiritual direction."

(Pope John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1996, p. 86.)