

## **Confession: Looking Into the Eyes of God: Foreword by Jean Vanier**

Paul Farren



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The sacrament of Confession is probably the most talked about sacraments in the Catholic Church. Some have declared the death of the sacrament, while others want to see a revival of the sacrament, believing for that to happen a greater emphasis needs to be placed on sin and hell.

This book explores the sacrament focusing on the two people who confess – God and the penitent. God is the primary confessor when he confesses his forgiveness for and trust in the one who is celebrating the sacrament. The gift of freedom, the existence of hell and the role of conscience are dealt with in the book while forgiveness and sin are discussed at length. The conclusion drawn about sin is that perhaps there are only two – the sin of Adam and Eve and the sin of the Innkeeper at Bethlehem.

Jean Vanier in his foreword to the book says :

Somewhere, along the line, in the history of the Church, people have become more centred upon obedience to laws than upon this relationship with love with a person, with Jesus: more centred upon justice than upon love. This book flows from an understanding of Confession as a meeting of love and as a renewal of friendship.

How that friendship is renewed in the sacrament is explored in the book using the Rite of Penance and St Peter in the gospel. This helps us to understand what happens in the sacrament and how best we can celebrate the sacrament.

Ultimately the book describes the sacrament of Reconciliation as God's gift to us to express God's humble

forgiveness and his confidence in us and also the place where we take responsibility for our lives. As we humbly seek forgiveness through the priest we make eye contact with God and are overwhelmed with his compassion.

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