Introduction: Why Do So Many Catholics Remain Tormented by the Past?

In a fast-paced world full of distractions and spiritual superficiality, many Catholics carry old guilt that has never been fully confessed. They go to the confessional, repeat the same sins, yet something is still missing: **peace of soul**. Why? Because there is a forgotten practice, a sacrament within the sacrament, that few undertake: **the general confession**.

This is not just a simple listing of recent sins but a deep examination of one's entire life—a radical purification that opens the door to **true conversion**. Are you ready to discover this hidden treasure of Catholic tradition?

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1. What Is a General Confession?

A general confession is **the review and admission of all serious sins committed throughout one's life**, or since the last well-made confession. It is not limited to recent sins but covers **everything that may be hidden, forgotten, or poorly confessed in the past**.

How Is It Different from an Ordinary Confession?

- **Ordinary confession**: Focuses on sins committed since the last confession.
- **General confession**: A thorough review of one's moral life, especially useful in key moments:
  - Before a profound conversion.
  - When changing one's state in life (marriage, priesthood, consecration).
  - During spiritual retreats or Ignatian exercises.
  - When there are doubts about past confessions (due to lack of repentance, grave forgetfulness, or invalid confession).

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2. Biblical and Historical Origins

The general confession is not a modern invention. **Jesus Himself promotes it** when He says:

> *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)*

This implies **a review of one's entire life**, not just recent sins.

The Church's Tradition

- **St. Augustine** made a public confession of his past life in his *Confessions*.
- **St. Teresa of Ávila** recounts how a general confession marked her definitive conversion.
- **St. Ignatius of Loyola** included it in his *Spiritual Exercises* as an essential step for interior freedom.

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3. Why Do So Few People Do It? (And Why You Should)

Many Catholics avoid general confession because of:

- **Shame**: Fear of revisiting past sins.
- **Ignorance**: They don't know it exists or how to do it.
- **False comfort**: They believe confessing "the usual sins" is enough.

But here are three powerful reasons to do it:

1. **Freedom from hidden guilt**: Many spiritual struggles come from unconfessed sins.
2. **Renewed grace**: God pours out special graces when the heart is truly humbled.
3. **Authentic conversion**: Without deep examination, we keep repeating the same mistakes.

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4. How to Make a General Confession (Practical Guide)

Step 1: Preparation

- **Prayer**: Ask the Holy Spirit for light to remember your sins.
- **Thorough examination of conscience**: Use a reliable guide (such as the *Catechism* or a *Confession Manual*).
- **Write down your sins**: So you don't forget anything important.

Step 2: Choose the Right Time and Confessor

- Find a priest who has time (not right before Mass).
- Consider doing it during a retreat or spiritual direction.

Step 3: Sincere and Complete Confession

- **No excuses**: State your sins clearly, without justifying yourself.
- **Ask for advice**: A good confessor will guide you.

Step 4: Embrace Your Penance with Joy

- Fulfill your penance with love.
- Thank God for His mercy.

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5. Powerful Testimonies

- **A man tormented by sins from his youth** found peace after a general confession at age 50.
- **A woman burdened by old resentments** was able to forgive after confessing her bitterness.

Conclusion: Are You Ready to Experience This

Liberation?

God does not want you to live chained to the past. **The general confession is a gift**, an opportunity to start anew. As Pope Francis said:

> *"God never tires of forgiving; it is we who tire of asking for mercy."*

When was the last time you did a complete soul-cleansing? If you've never done it, today is the day. **Your inner peace is just one sacrament away.**

Go to confession with courage! Grace is waiting for you.

Would you like a detailed guide for your general confession? Leave your questions in the comments and share this article with someone who needs liberation. **God bless you!**