

Words change as we shift our focus on what we are doing. Long ago folk would say the priest was going to **shrive** sinners – that meant hear their confession – but that pretty much focused on what the priest was doing. We still say we are **going to confession** – that seems to focus on accurately admitting our sins. We refer to this event as a **penance** service; I never cared much for the word penance – in English at least it comes too close to the concept of punishment and that's not really what we are here for. I guess more proper terminology is **reconciliation** – it is much more accurate but it also is a bit abstract. I have a word for what we do that I think is a better fit but probably won't catch on. I like "**rehab**" or if you want something more churchy then "spiritual rehab."

Everyone knows what rehab is; lots of famous people do; it's even kind of a trendy thing to boast about. First admit that you have some problem and that you just can't handle it alone and you turn to outside help to deal with it. That's rehab and that is exactly what we are doing tonight. We admit that some areas of our lives are sinful. **You really have to start there.** Some people come to the sacrament and say things like "I'd like to be more patient" or "I'd like to be kinder to people." You might as well say, "I'd like to win a Noble prize" or "I'd like to see a unicorn." It just a wish list; you have to start by actually admitting what's wrong. If you are cranky and impatient – just say that, if you are mean to someone, just say that. Rehab and reconciliation start with the same first step – accepting that you have a problem.

You presence here say you've tried but can't fix things on your own. Now you know you need the grace of God and the support of the church to start making a change. Guidance and a support group = rehab. I don't think the term will become accepted church terminology but at least for tonight I think it will help to remember that we are here for rehab and our presence forms the support group we need to move ahead.