



## Sin vs. Mistake

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

Lots of people make mistakes. In fact, we all make mistakes. How often don't we tell ourselves, "Okay, I made a mistake. Nobody's perfect. No big deal."

But what happens when a mistake is also a sin? Is there a difference? Yes. Consider the following:

If you make a mistake, all you have to do is do better. Mistakers just have to try harder, break a nasty habit and be more consistent in their behavior. Mistakers just have to learn from their mistakes, that's all.

But, if I'm a sinner, that means I need a Savior. That means that there are times when I hit my knees and say, "I'm sorry."

Think of it this way: the difference between a mistake and a sin is the difference between a jet ski and scuba gear. One skims the surface, the other goes deep.

Maybe that's why it's hard to go to Confession now and then. That sacrament forces us "to go deep." For instance, a mistake involves a judgement call, but a sin involves repentance. A mistake makes you say, "Let's just move on." But a sin makes you say, "Let me make it to you." But the most important difference between being *a sinner* and a person who *simply makes mistakes* is the word LOVE.

A person who makes a mistake is in love with himself. A person who commits a sin is in love with God...and feels the hurt that settles in the heart when God's unconditional love is abused, overlooked or taken for granted.

"I've come to call sinners, not the righteous," says the Lord. Then He adds, "There is more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner than over 99 people who have no need to repent."

Furthermore, the Book of Psalms reminds us that God removes our sins from us "as far as the East is from the West."

This give us folks in the Texas Panhandle an advantage over other sinners. Why? Because any drive down a country road provides a clear view of just how far the East is from the West!

So, the next time you find yourself on I-40, take a long look across the open plains and thank God for his gift of mercy, the mercy that removes your sins as far as the East is from the West.