

# SAID ED February 24, 2013

## Confession

Pope Benedict has asked us to enter into a “Year of Faith.” It began in the fall on the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. During this special time the pope and the bishops have asked us to focus on the need for growing in our faith personally. As part of this invitation to deepen our faith, we are reminded about the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation – Confession.

We hear a lot about the “New Evangelization” as we are challenged to allow the Gospel message of repentance and renewal to radiate out from each of our hearts. We are being challenged to renew our faith and strengthen our relationship with God in Jesus Christ. One of the ways in which we do this is by a sincere look at our own lives and the need for repentance for our sinful ways. To help us do this, the church offers us the Sacrament of Reconciliation – Confession. I’ll be talking more about this as Lent unfolds.

As part of this journey of faith, every parish community in the diocese will be offering a special Day of Penance during Holy Week this year. On Tuesday, March 26, all the churches in our diocese will offer Confessions from 12:30 to 7:00pm.

Today I want to share a little bit about the history of the Sacrament. It comes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

“Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably. During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had committed particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry, murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years, before receiving reconciliation. To this ‘order of penitents’ (which concerned only certain grave sins), one was only rarely admitted and in certain regions only once in a lifetime. During the seventh century Irish missionaries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental Europe the ‘private’ practice of penance, which does not require public and prolonged completion of penitential works before reconciliation with the Church. From that time on, the sacrament has been performed in secret between penitent and priest. This new practice envisioned the possibility of repetition and so opened the way to a regular frequenting of this sacrament. It allowed the forgiveness of grave sins and venial sins to be integrated into one sacramental celebration. In its main lines this is the form of penance that the Church has practiced down to our day” (*CCC 1447*).

Remember this Sacrament celebrates the forgiveness and mercy of God which we hope to touch in a deeper way during this season of Lenten Penance.

Have a great week!

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