

SAID ED March 10, 2013

Confession of our sins

The sacrament of penance is an experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy. Not only does it free us from our sins, but it also challenges us to have the same compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. We are liberated to be forgivers. We obtain new insight into the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned".

Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The sacrament of penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession, we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God. It is a holy moment in which we place ourselves in God's presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially our mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God. We are reminded that "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). While all the sacraments bring us an experience of the mercy and compassion that comes from Christ's dying and rising, it is the sacrament of reconciliation that is the unique sacrament of mercy. It is based on our need to be forgiven personally by the priest who acts in the name of Christ and on behalf of the Church.

Pope Benedict said: "the sacrament of penance is one of the Church's precious treasures, since authentic world renewal is accomplished only through forgiveness. Nothing can improve the world if evil is not overcome. Evil can be overcome only by forgiveness. Certainly, it must be an effective forgiveness; but only the Lord can give us this forgiveness, a forgiveness that drives away evil not only with words but truly destroys it. Only suffering can bring this about and it has truly taken place with the suffering love of Christ, from whom we draw the power to forgive." (Pope Benedict XVI; Homily at Pentecost Mass for Priestly Ordination; May 15, 2005.)

On Tuesday of Holy Week, we will have a Diocesan **Day of Penance**. This Day of Penance has been scheduled in every parish of the diocese to give every Catholic an opportunity to celebrate individual confession in their parish on the same day! Fr. Edison and I will be available in the Reconciliation room in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in church on Tuesday, March 26 from 12:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

Please open your heart to the grace of the sacrament. I will say more about the "official guidelines" for how to go to Confession later. The single and most important thing about going to Confession is that you "speak from your heart". Please don't get caught up in saying the right words, they are secondary. It is the sincerity of the heart that is the most important.

Have a good fourth week of Lent!
