



Year of Mercy

Learn, Experience, Share

February 20-21, 2016

The Sacrament of Mercy

As we journey through the holy Lenten season, it's a good time to look at the Sacrament of Mercy: Reconciliation. We have many opportunities to receive this sacrament (also called Penance and Confession) during Lent. In fact, our parish Penance Service is February 24 at 6:30 p.m. See the bulletin for services at other local parishes throughout Lent.

Many of us reluctantly "make ourself go to Confession." Maybe we need to think about it differently. Pope Benedict IV describes it beautifully:

This Sacrament begins with a look at one's actual condition in life, contributes uniquely to achieving that "openness of heart" which enables one to turn one's gaze to God so that He may enter one's life. The certainty that He is close and in his mercy awaits the human being, even one who is involved in sin, in order to heal his weakness with the grace of the sacrament, is always a ray of hope for the world.

So think about "turning one's gaze to God...letting him enter your life...His mercy awaits...He heals our weakness...a ray of hope.



The Gift

"Peace be with you!" With these words, the Risen Lord greeted his frightened Apostles in the Upper Room on the day of his Resurrection. They were troubled, anxious, and fearful—much like each one of us at some point in our lives. Christ repeated the words, "Peace be with you."

But then he added, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them" (Jn 20:19-23).

What an extraordinary gift!

Pope Francis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation



"In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, also called Confession, we meet the Lord, who wants to grant forgiveness and the grace to live a renewed life in Him. In this sacrament, he prepares us to receive Him free from serious sin, with a lively faith, earnest hope, and sacrificial love in the Eucharist.

"We bishops and priests are eager to help you if you experience difficulty, hesitation, or uncertainty about approaching the Lord in this sacrament. If you have not received this healing sacrament in a long time, we are ready to welcome you. We, whom Christ has ordained to minister this forgiveness in his name, are also approaching this sacrament, as both penitents and ministers, throughout our lives and at this special moment of grace during Lent."