

"Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but myself act in your soul." (Faustina, Diary, 1602) Jesus reminded St Faustina, that it is he himself who heals us in confession. In the sacrament of Reconciliation, we receive the outpouring of love that heals our broken souls.

What gifts can we give Jesus this Christmas?

He is always with us waiting for our heart, love and trust...

Confession is also a very good preparation to meet Jesus and receive Him and all graces through Him in the Holy Eucharist.

We have nothing to fear, for only joy awaits when we approach Jesus in the sacrament of Reconciliation, humbly begging for his Mercy. **"What joy fills My Heart when you return to Me. Because you are weak, I take you in my arms and carry you to the home of my Father"** (Faustina, Diary, 1486 and Divine Mercy Bible)

The Beauty of Mercy: Pope Francis and Confession

Since he was elected Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has continually emphasized the infinite mercy of a God who never tires of reaching out. "Among the Sacraments, certainly Reconciliation renders present with particular efficacy the merciful face of God: it is constantly and ceaselessly made real and manifest," Pope Francis says with the force of personal experience and conviction. (Internal Forum organized by the Apostolic Penitentiary March 2015.)

"The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a Sacrament of healing. When I go to confession, it is in order to be healed, to heal my soul, to heal my heart and to be healed of some wrongdoing," describes Pope Francis. (General Audience Feb. 2014)

The Holy Father stresses that forgiveness of our sins is not something that we can give ourselves. In confession, we ask forgiveness from Jesus. "Forgiveness is not the fruit of our own efforts but rather a gift, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit who fills us with the wellspring of mercy and of grace that flows unceasingly from the open heart of the Crucified and Risen Christ." (General Audience Feb. 2014).

The shame we feel speaking our sins to another makes us more humble, as we unburden ourselves before God, notes the Holy Father. "When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, happy. This is the beauty of Confession!"

Understanding the struggle that some experience when it comes to accepting, understanding and participating in this sacrament, Pope Francis boldly cries: "Be courageous and go to Confession!"

Urging frequent confession, Pope Francis says: "Go – the priest will be good. Jesus is there, and Jesus is more benevolent than priests, Jesus receives you, he receives you with so much love." (General Audience, Feb. 2014).

"The Sacrament of Penance or Confession is, in fact, like a 'second baptism' that refers back always to the first to strengthen and renew it. In this sense, the day of our Baptism is the point of departure

for this most beautiful journey, a journey towards God that lasts a lifetime, a journey of conversion that is continually sustained by the Sacrament of Penance. Think about this: when we go to confess our weaknesses, our sins, we go to ask the pardon of Jesus, but we also go to renew our Baptism through his forgiveness. And this is beautiful, it is like celebrating the day of Baptism in every Confession,” says Pope Francis (General Audience 13 November 2013).

Pope Francis invites all to focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation as an important dimension of experiencing God’s mercy. The Holy Father says: “So many people, including young people, are returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation; through this experience they are rediscovering a path back to the Lord, living a moment of intense prayer and finding meaning in their lives. Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God’s mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace.”(Misericordiae Vultus, #17)

(From 2016 Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Useful resources:

<https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-faith/sacraments/confession>
(A+Guide+to+Confession.pdf)

<https://goodconfession.com/>

Videos: Fr. Mike Schmitz: Making a Good Confession

Fr. Mike Schmitz: Confessing the Same Sins Over and Over Again

Fr. Mark-Mary: Bringing the Same Sins to Confession? Try This

Examination of Conscience resources: A Guided Examination of Conscience – video from Fr. Mark-Mary

usccb.org – various types of examinations

Goodconfession.com

Catholic Information Network Examination of Conscience – in-depth examination

Books: Pocket Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation by Fr. Mike Schmitz and Fr. Josh Johnson

Go in Peace: Your Guide to the Purpose and Power of Confession by Fr. Mitch Pacwa and Sean Brown

Frequent Confession: Its Place in the Spiritual Life by Dom Benedict Bauer

(From Ascensionpress, Confession 201: How to Confess Like an Adult (Jeannette Williams))

