



Peace is....reconciliation



Romans 5: 8“...but God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”

Reflection:

Have you ever avoided opening a beautifully wrapped gift, given to you by someone whom you love and who loves you dearly? Our Lord has a special gift and graces designed especially for your soul, waiting for you in the confessional. A gift of spiritual healing, nourishment, and growth awaits you. It gives you the chance to be reconciled with God, to start anew, to be at peace.

How often do we walk by and ignore the gift?

“The regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit.”¹ St. Augustine tells us, “The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works.”¹ Just as we feed and exercise our bodies and our minds, so must we also feed and exercise our spirits!

What if I have not been to confession in a long time? Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you and make your sins known to you. Consider your relationships. Do I act in a way that is respectful to God, to myself, to others? Have I observed the Commandments? Have I followed the teachings of Jesus? The scriptures today remind us that God’s mercy is far greater than our sinfulness.

What are the conditions of a good confession? We must examine our conscience, become aware of and take responsibility for our sins, and truly be sorry for our sins. This means we will do our best not to commit them again, which often requires avoiding circumstances in which we may be tempted. Then we must confess our sins to the priest.

Once we have received God’s mercy, we are to share that mercy with others. Jesus teaches us to pray, “... forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...” He used many stories to teach us the importance of forgiving others. We have a lot of opportunities each day to overlook others’ faults, to soften our hearts towards them, to see the good in them, to forgive them for the ways that they have hurt us or let us down. Sometimes the hardest ones to forgive are those who are close to us: our parents, our siblings, our spouses, our children, our co-workers, ... even the driver who cuts you off at the intersection...

Some of us have trouble forgiving ourselves, or of letting go of past sins we have already confessed. In order to grow spiritually, it is important to let go of what is holding us back from closeness to Christ.

Our sins damage our relationships. Forgiveness restores relationships. Reconciliation brings peace.



Action:

- **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis.**
- **Make amends with those you have ill-feeling for. Begin by praying for that person, and for the grace to forgive him or her.**

¹Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) No. 1458. Discussion of this sacrament begins on p.357