

God's Grace Through Reconciliation

When we are honest, open and willing to allow the spirit to touch us a grace of healing can be felt and experienced. A penitent may grow in faith and trust the Sacrament of Reconciliation presents an opportunity for the penitent to draw ever closer to God. One's ego must be pushed aside to allow one's soul to be freed of sin.

A penitent may ask the priest if some direction is needed to express their confession. The person may be struggling to find the graces needed to find the inner peace they so much long for. Consequently, I have experienced many wonderful encounters as well as compassionate priest more that willing to walk with me in the confessional. For example, it was as if Jesus was holding my hand and guiding his priest to help me experience the reward of a good confession. Therefore, the sacrament resulted in peace of mind and a feeling that God loves me no matter that. We all need to remind ourselves that God is bigger that our sins.



We can imagine that Christ awaits at the door of our hearts, our very souls to create us anew., much as the Prodigal Father stood waiting for the return of his wayward (rebellious) son. We all need that personal connection. We have the opportunity to come to the sacrament seeking a variety of gifts, assurance, forgiveness, comfort, freedom from guilt and offering of hope. To put it bluntly we enter the sacrament to encounter and meet Christ. As the Church teaches, Christ is present, and the penitent is heard by Christ. In this point, I see how our actions and words can open the "door" and help us "see" Christ in personable way. Therefore, a result that may lead one to feel shocked in a way that Christ has become "clearer" in their life in ways never felt possible or imagined. That is what "sacrament" is all about! Grace comes from God, as the priest is instrumental and the penitent benefits as receptor. All is then accomplished in God's time. Opportunities present themselves if we act and accept the blessings of the sacramental graces which can create us anew in Christ. Here the priest has fulfilled what Christ's priest is: an instrument of love, forgiveness and hope. Can we accept our place at the door and the open it? Communication is so important! Just think if the faithful Father did not go out to meet the wayward son but simply instructed his servants that he wanted to talk with him.

The sacrament exists not to show how bad we are but how loving and gracious our Lord is for his people. Sacramental reconciliation is a means to conversion, a means by which we can continue to grow spiritually and psychologically. In addition, it is a way of experiencing God's mercy, pardon, and peace. The Roman Catholic Church teaches us that the sacrament is all about free forgiveness of sin and conversion an experience that I have felt many times throughout my life when I have lived outside of God's realm. A wonderful and great spiritual awakening is to have the weight of sin removed from your life. One can live only so long in darkness until one must surrender. We are truly blessed as Roman Catholics to have this sacrament. Hence, the wondrous experience of free forgiveness and conversion awaits us in the confessional resulting in special graces and a deeper meaningful relationship with Christ.

Nevertheless, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a mysterious encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, a real blessing awaits each of us and the graces so very bountiful, God's love and mercy is so infinite and unwarranted.

From the desk of Father Rick

I have always loved the season of Advent - waiting, expecting, hoping and anticipating. We have hope as we await the coming of the infant Child Jesus. How will we use this Advent season?

For Advent means "coming". We commemorate his coming at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago, Christ's first coming "opened for us the way to eternal salvation".



Like the early Christians, we should yearn for the coming of Christ. They prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Set aside time to talk, listening to God daily. Quiet your heart and wait for his still small voice to whisper to each of us. He has good things to say. Go ahead and let ourselves be surprised and await with eager expectations by what he does as we prepare for the infant Child Jesus's birth. He will come to us in this Mass, offering us his body and blood in the Holy Eucharist. Prepare to receive him with open hearts and dedicate ourselves to him to live anew. We will have accomplished in some part what the Church bids us to receive this blessed Advent of 2018.

Advent is a gift that allows us to look at our frightening world, yet still have confidence and hope. "Be prepared. The Son of Man is coming at the time we least expect. Come walk in the light of the Lord to meet him in the Sacrament of Penance. We have hope as we await the coming of the infant Child Jesus. How will we use this Advent season?

Come, Lord Jesus!

Father Rick Hobbs

