



From the Pastor's Desk:

Returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Guide for Four Sets of Circumstances – PART 4

4: "I go frequently, but I confess the same venial sins over and over again."

"I celebrate the Sacrament at least once a month, and sometimes weekly, but I often begin by telling Father that I have no mortal sins to confess. It is usually just confessing my impatience and my tendency to judge others. I often confess my pride and my envy of others who have more than I do. And more and more I've been just confessing I can't concentrate on my prayer or when I'm at Mass. I don't know if going to Confession is helping me anymore."

The enemy of our human nature, the Evil Spirit, would love to have us just quit trying and would love even more to separate us from the Sacrament of God's mercy and peace. We can first of all make sure that we are examining our conscience on what we might have failed to do. Have we been as charitable and generous as we could have been? Have we feed the hungry, closed the naked, visited the sick or imprisoned, in whatever ways we've heard our Lord's call to do those things? Have we exercised our civic responsibility and formed our consciences to hear the cry of the poor and follow the teachings of the Church regarding our role in the world and civil society? There are many ways we came come to a renewed sense of repentance, after years of confessing only the same things. After making sure we have not missed some serious sin in our examination, we can celebrate the Sacrament by being deeply grateful that our Lord has kept us from serious sin. We can then ask his grace to help us with the deep patters, like impatience or judging others, for example. Offering us the grace of healing can be such a help to our being a witness to holiness and to our service of others.

Preparing, planning and celebrating

The greatest fruit in the Sacrament of Reconciliation will come if we take the time to prepare well. It takes real prayer and grace to come to this Sacrament well. It takes planning to say what we want to say well. This all part of the time of grace that allows God to work in us and prepare us for a grace filled encounter. Finally, it is so important to come to the Sacrament as a celebration. This is an occasion for great joy and deep peace. It is a time of sincere expectation of grace to be given to us. Whatever Penance the priest offers us - "as a remedy for the healing desired" - we can all come forth from the Sacrament, giving thanks and praise for this experience of power of the Incarnation, Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus touching my heart this day. This was all for me and it was for this moment. When we say "Amen" to this grace and open our hands and heart to then receive the Eucharist and say "Amen" again, we experience the full meaning of the Communion with Jesus given to us in these two Sacraments together.

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I pray that you will take advantage of one of the many opportunities offered by the priests for the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation – Confession. I hope that these reflections I have offered over the past weeks of different struggles people have with confession and their sinfulness will enable you to accept the call of God to this healing encounter with His Divine forgiving love.

Confessions are heard Monday through Saturday following the 8:00am Mass; Saturday from 4:00pm – 5:00pm and Sunday mornings at 9:00, 10:30 and 12:00noon before Mass. During Holy Week confessions will be on Monday from 3:00pm – 9:00pm (in all parishes throughout the Diocese); on Tuesday here after the 8:00am Mass; on Holy Thursday from 4:00pm – 5:00pm; on Good Friday from 11:00am – 12 noon, from 4:00pm – 5:00pm and AFTER the 8:00pm Evening Liturgy of the Lord's Passion; and finally on Holy Saturday from 11:00am – 12:00noon and from 3:00pm – 5:00pm.

This is a MOST generous schedule of confession availability, please bring peace to your soul.

May God +bless you, and yours, now and forever.

Father Anthony