

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You've heard me announcing that on each of the **Wednesday nights of Lent there will be an opportunity for confessions from 6:30-8:00 p.m.** Lent is an excellent time for each of us to examine our lives, to take some personal inventory and to seek the Lord's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). **I believe two reasons people don't come to confession are (1)** they're not sure what sins they might confess and **(2)** they've forgotten "how" to go to confession. To help you with this I offer below (1) an "examination of conscience," a personal inventory and **(2)** a refresher on how to go to confession. Please feel free to bring this page with you to confession: copies of the same (including forms adapted for **teens** and for **younger children**) will be available on a table outside the Penance Room which is located on your right as you enter the church from the Monument Square doors. **Please note that this coming week I'll be away visiting my sister in Colorado so on Wednesday, March 22, Fr. Myles Sheehan will be hearing confessions.**

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming

ADULTS Prepare to Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Do I love God? Do I worship God? Are there false gods I worship by giving them more attention than I give to God (*work, money, position, prestige, superstition, possessions?*)? Do I pray every day? Do I pray on Sundays by participating at Mass? Do I make an effort to grow in faith and in knowledge of my Church and its teachings? Do I thank God for his gifts to me? Am I careful not to use the name of God and the name of Jesus carelessly?

- Do I love others? At home? At work? In my neighborhood? At school? in the parish? Have I abused anyone - physically or emotionally? Do I speak unkindly to others - or about others? Do I give my parents the respect they deserve? Am I a good and faithful parent? Am I good to my brothers and sisters? Am I faithful to my friends? Do I reach out generously to the poor? Do I share my belongings with friends and family members? Do I try to care for the needs of others before I take care of my own needs? Do I invite other people into my group of friends? Do I exclude other people from my circle of friends? Do I reach out to those who are lonely?

- Have I stolen? Have I taken what does not belong to me? Have I taken anything I have not paid for? Have I damaged what belongs to others? Am I envious or jealous of what other people have? Am I greedy or selfish? Do I place too much importance on material goods? Do I trust that God will provide what I truly need?

- Do I tell the truth? Do I lie? Am I honest with myself? Am I honest with God? Am I honest with my family? Am I honest with my employers? with those with whom I do business? with my friends? Am I fair in my dealings with others? Do I object to injustice when I see it and work to remedy it? Do I cheat? Do I take credit for work that's not mine? Do I gossip about others? Do I contribute to tearing down the reputations of other people? Do I forgive those who have hurt me? Do I ask forgiveness of those whom I have hurt? Do I hold grudges or resentments?

- Have I taken care of and respected the gift of my body? Have I abused my body and my mind with drugs or alcohol? Have I respected the gift of sexuality that God has given me? Have I respected the sexuality of other persons? If married, have I been faithful to my spouse in thought, word and deed? Have I taken advantage of another person for my own pleasure? Do I take part in entertainment, Internet sites, conversations or jokes of an inappropriate nature?

- Have I been faithful to my conscience? Have I given in to the pressure of those around me to things I know are wrong? Have I encouraged others to participate in wrongdoing?

And here's an outline of the sacrament of reconciliation:

Preparation for Confession

Before going to confession, examine your conscience, as above...

At the beginning

You and the priest make the sign of the cross together, saying,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Confession of Sins

You then make your confession

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

It has been _____ since my last confession.

These are my sins...

Here you tell the priest your sins and then say:

For these and all my sins I am truly sorry.

The priest may offer some words of counsel and then will assign an act of penance: either a prayer or a work of charity or mercy.

A Prayer of Contrition

With this prayer you express your sorrow for your sins and a resolve not to sin again. You may use the following prayer or another Act of Contrition you know.

An Act of Contrition

*You may pray this Act of Contrition **or** one you already know.*

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.

In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,

I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.

In his name, my God, have mercy.

Absolution by the Priest

Following the Act of Contrition, the priest extends his hand over you and prays the absolution:

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.

Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the + Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Peace be with you.

And with your spirit.