

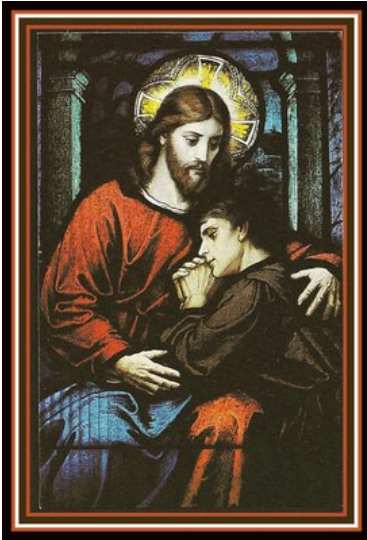
The Sacrament of Confession

Beloved friends, Jesus has come down from heaven for one reason: to rescue us from our sins, so that we can be restored to Our Heavenly Father. Since the Original Sin, the human race has wandered away - we have given ourselves to so many wrong things - things which leave us empty and take us away from the heart of God. We cannot find happiness in anything else but God. Animals can be perfectly satisfied with food and sex, they have no addictions, anger or anxiety attacks, they can be fulfilled by material needs. But we have the image of God within us; our soul is not made of matter and we therefore cannot be satisfied with material things or even persons; we can only be satisfied by possessing the Infinite. Our hearts are made for God, and only he can make us happy. Baptism makes us beautiful, and restores this image of God in us. But so often we wound that image. We wound that beautiful image in others and we deface that image in ourselves. But we can take heart! Our Father in heaven knows all this. And so he sent his dear Son to help us. Jesus seems to tell the whole reason he came, in the story of the Prodigal Son.



'And he said, a certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me. And he divided his means between them. And not many days later the younger son gathered up all his wealth, and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his fortune in loose living. And after he had spent all, there came a grievous famine over that country; and he began himself to suffer want. And he went and joined one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his farm to feed swine. And he longed to fill himself with the pods that the swine were eating, but no one offered to give them to him.





But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired men in my father's house have bread in abundance, while I am perishing here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no longer worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired men.' And he arose and went to his father. But while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no longer worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Fetch quickly the best robe and put it on him, and give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet; and bring out the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and is found.' (Luke 15:11)

This prodigal son is us: you and I. We have squandered our inheritance in sin, we are unhappy and have ended with the pigs! But the Lord never gives up on us and is waiting for us to return home. This is why Jesus has given us the Holy Sacrament of Confession, so that we can begin again.

After his resurrection, Jesus gave to his first priests, the apostles, the power to forgive sins in his name.

'As the Father has sent me, I also send you...and he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' (John 20:21)

Our Lord sends his priests into the world to continue to heal and forgive his people. And so he gave us Confession. Going to Confession is very easy. First, examine your conscience; that means to think about your sins, examine your life. Then enter the confessional and kneel at the screen.



Begin: 'Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been - tell how long since your last confession. Then say your sins. For serious sins, we must tell them honestly and how many times. Be straightforward and brief. It should normally take 1 minute to say your sins. Then say, 'For these and all the sins of my past life I am very sorry.' The priest will give you a little advice, and then give you your Penance. Those are prayers that you say later. He will then ask you to say your Act of Contrition. The priest then gives you Absolution, which is the forgiveness of your sins. At that moment, you are free of all your sins, even those you forgot. You may say 'Thank you Father.' After you leave, kneel down in the Church and say your Penance. This blog has a guide that you can print on two sides, and cut and fold to help you prepare when you go to Confession. I hope you like it when you go.

