

The Sacrament of Reconciliation — Part I

Lent is about many things: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving come to mind immediately. Giving up and doing extra may come to mind next when considering the meaning of Lent. Liturgically everything we do during these forty days finds its culmination in celebrating the Easter Vigil. Lent is about getting ready.

At the heart of our observance is a deeper realization that God's mercy is always an invitation to each of us from God. We do not earn forgiveness from God, nor do we merit mercy in such a way that God pays us back for being sorry. Forgiveness from God is a perpetual offer given to us just for the taking when we open our hearts to receive this too-good-to-be-true gift.

Please seriously consider celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation this Lent as a part of your Lenten observance. For many people there is a fear of celebrating the Sacrament due to lingering memories of being forced to "go to Confession" as a sort of punishment for sinning. For others there is apprehension because "it's been so long that I'm not sure what to do." For still others there is a quiet voice that proclaims "I don't need to go, I can say I'm sorry to God any time I want."

These responses all have an *element* of truth. We would recognize today that celebrating the Sacrament out of mere routine, or a punishment, is not helpful. If it's been awhile since celebrating the Sacrament, it is up to the priest to lead you through the rite, not the penitent. And, yes, we can say that we are sorry to God any time we feel moved.

The reality is that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is so much more than any of these responses. The Sacrament is a *celebration* of God's mercy that restores us to full relationship with God *and* one another. There is both a vertical (God) and horizontal (other people) dimension of right relationship that the Sacrament celebrates. We can not do this on our own.

This year you will note that we have expanded times to celebrate the Sacrament during the Lenten Season. The Regional Penance Service will have nine confessors. Parents, *please* assure that you make time for your children to celebrate the Sacrament — please go with them as an example to them.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is that time that we *celebrate* God's mercy and forgiveness, offered to us at all times whenever we choose to accept this gift.

St. Veronica – Each Saturday 2:30-3:30 pm
St. John Fisher – Each Saturday 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Regional Penance Service at St. Veronica
Tuesday, March 10, 7:00 pm (9 confessors)

The Light Is On - Regional
Tuesday, March 24, 7:00 pm at St. Veronica (3 confessors)

St. Veronica – Wednesday, March 18, 6:00-7:00 pm
St. Veronica – Wednesday, March 25, 6:00-7:00 pm
St. Veronica – Saturday, March 28, 11:00 am – 12:00 noon (AB)
St. John Fisher – Wednesday, April 1, 9:00 am (during exposition until all are heard)
St. Veronica – Saturday, March 4, 11:00 am – 12:00 noon