

Why Confession? Why do we have confession? If God knows everything, why can't we just tell Him that we're sorry when we do something wrong?

Confession may be one of the most difficult parts of our faith for some. But for others, Confession is something they deeply look forward to. Your question is a good one. Let me offer some thoughts.

First of all, it's very true that "God knows everything." We call that omniscience. So, yes, He knows everything you've done and He knows whether you are sorry for that or not. But there is a big difference between God "knowing" what you did and His act of forgiveness.

For example, if you sinned against a friend with whom you were very close and then you felt sorry for that it's possible that your friend would realize, just by knowing you, that you were truly sorry. But that doesn't mean that you can just presume on your friend's goodness and forgiveness. The best thing to do, in this situation, is to actually sit down and tell your friend you are sorry and to have your friend tell you that you are forgiven. This very human exchange brings about reconciliation.

So it is with God. God is all merciful and wants to forgive us all our sins. But for true reconciliation to take place God wants you to actually say those words and then to hear the words, spoken by the priest, that you are forgiven. So Confession is not only about God forgiving us, it is also about reconciliation with God on a human level.

What's important to understand is that God offers us forgiveness in His way. He forgives us through a human being. Who is that human being? It's the Father's Son who became one of us. Jesus is the one who offers the forgiveness of God and Jesus is both fully God and human. But how does Jesus do that now that He has ascended back into Heaven? Well, before He ascended He gave His divine power of forgiveness to His first priests, the apostles. They, in turn, passed that power onto others who passed it on to others down through the ages all the way to our present age. Priests, despite the fact that they are imperfect themselves, have the spiritual power of Jesus to actually speak His words of forgiveness to others. Therefore, when a priest says, "I absolve you" we must hear Jesus Himself, as the human face of God, saying to us those same words.

Why did God choose to use priests to dispense His forgiveness? Honestly, we really don't have a perfect answer to that question. Sure there have been wonderful writings and reflections and teachings on this subject throughout the history of the Church. But, in the end, we will only fully understand this mystery of how God gives us His forgiveness when we are in Heaven. For now, we must simply follow what Jesus taught and receive His forgiveness in the way we know He offers it.

And on a psychological level, I, as a priest, have seen so many people benefit from actually hearing those words spoken from my mouth. So many times I have seen people come into the confessional scared and ashamed and walk out freed and at peace. So it really works. Make sure you give it a try soon!

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Catholic Charismatic Conference

"Thy Kingdom Come" is the theme for the Catholic Charismatic Conference, March 27-29, at the Copeland Tower Suites and Conference Center in Metairie. Sr. Briege McKenna will be featured Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning when she will teach and pray for healing. Also ministering will be Fr. John Gordon, Fr. Beau Charbonnet, Jean and Janice Charbonnet, Alex Lorio, Danny Loar, Deacon Larry and Andi Oney and Patti Mansfield. Pope Francis has called upon the Charismatic Renewal to "share the grace of the Baptism in the Spirit with the whole Church." That is the aim of this conference. To register and for more information on schedule and hotel, visit www.ccrno.org or call CCRNO at 504-828-1368.

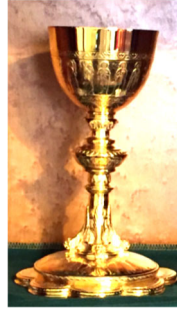


Fish Frys Need Help!

The Knights of Columbus are asking for volunteer help with their Lenten fish frys. They begin February 28 and are held every Friday of Lent. This year the event will be held in the cafeteria (bad weather won't be a factor.) Help is needed for preparation (8:00-11:00,) during the sale hours (11:00-5:00,) and for clean-up (5:00 until 7:00.) To volunteer to be a part of this widely anticipated and enjoyable event, please call Bob Maginnis, Grand Knight, at 259-9871.

PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

MASS INTENTIONS



Each Mass is offered for the intentions of all present and for the following:

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

4:00 pm SJM Parishioners, living & deceased

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

10:00 am Intentions of our parishioners who are ill, for all who have asked for prayer, and for the repose of the souls of

+Elvera Eddington	+Emile Oliver
+Thelma & Leon Woll, Sr.	+Junior Frederick
+Brulée Family	+Gerald Perry
+Ronnie Lewis	+Rochelle Age
+Gertrude Brulée	+Keith Harleaux
+William R. Buoch, Sr.	+Emily Colombel
+Louis & Leontine Dalmas	+Ann Hoffman
+Norman Jackson, Jr.	+Lumina Lafitte

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3

8:30 am Communion Service

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

8:30 am +Nile Hamilton, Sr.
+Catherine Taylor
+Mamie Derbigny
+Sister Mary Eugenie

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

8:30 am +Jane Escudé

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

8:30 am +Napoleon Family

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

8:30 am +Poor Souls in Purgatory

Please pray for them: Gloria Age, Thais Ardoin, Herbert Briant, Sr., Dominic Carmouche, Wilbert Clementin, Sr., Gail Wright, Melody Sanderson, Cheryl Napoleon, Sarah Lafitte, Valerie Smith, Mary Mitchell, Gloria Mitchell, Denise Thomas, Audrey Wilson, Nadine Rochell, Gloria Harris, Gertrude Harris, William Mitchell, Maggie Haney, Loretta Parent, Walter Glapion, Susan Lauterbach, Russell Jordan, Denise Rachal, Irene Ward, Marguerite Ragas, Irma Springer, Vivian Picou, Byron Williams, Jr., Kim Stovall, Michelle Irwin, Dennis LeBlanc, Betty Reynolds, Laurie Robért, Meredith LeBlanc, Pamela Jordon, Mallory Tuggles, Virgie Louis and Clarence, Robert and Buster Mitchell.

Please pray for all of our parishioners, especially those who are homebound or in hospitals, nursing homes and hospice. Please notify the rectory of the change in status of you or your relatives on the prayer list.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

- 03 Monday** ST. BLAISE or ST. ANSGAR or WEEKDAY
2 Samuel 15:13-14, 30, 16:5-13; Ps 3; Mark 5:1-20
- 04 Tuesday** WEEKDAY
2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14B, 24-25A, 30-19:3; Ps 86; Mark 5:21-43
- 05 Wednesday** WEEKDAY
2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17; Ps 32; Mark 6:1-6
- 06 Thursday** ST. PAUL MIKI AND COMPANIONS
1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; 1 Chronicles 29; Mark 6:7-13
- 07 Friday** WEEKDAY
Sirach 47:2-11; Ps 18; Mark 6:14-29
- 08 Saturday** ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA or ST. JEROME EMILIANI or WEEKDAY
2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17; s 51; Mark 4:35-41
- 02 Sunday** FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Isaiah 58:7-10; Ps 112; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16

Lectors & Commentators

Feb 01 Elisa Triplett, Gaynell Marchand
Feb 02 Hilda Bell, Marlin Gusman

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

Feb 01 Janice James, Michael Sinegar
Feb 02 Adaline Patterson, Louis Flattmann

Our Men and Women in the Service

Please remember to pray for our men and women who are serving in the armed forces, especially:

SSgt Bryan Stovall, Jr., USMC	PO2 Melissa Flot, USN
PVT Robert Cook, USA	SGT Robert Lambert, USA
SSgt. Anthony Montz, USAF	Alvin Benjamin, USN
SSgt. Davin Hornsby, USAF	A1C Andrew Montz, USAF

**100th Year Commemoration
of the First St. James Major Mass
Saturday, February 8
4:00 pm
Celebrant: Rev. Leo Meyer
Pastor Emeritus**

Church Support

OFFERTORY COLLECTION JAN 25-26

First Collection	\$ 2492.00
Second Collection	547.00
	<u>\$3039.00</u>

Thank you for supporting your parish.