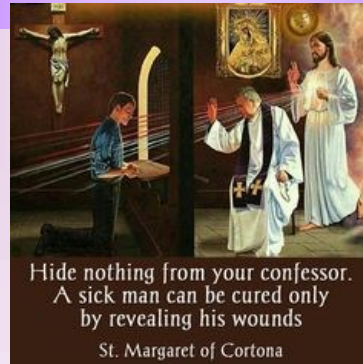
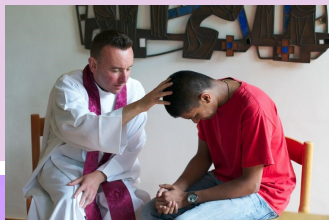


Sacraments: Signs of Grace

The Sacraments are central to the life of each Catholic and for the Church as a whole. Before receiving Holy Communion and being Confirmed, **children must be prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance** (Reconciliation) so that they (like we) can approach the Sacraments in a state of grace.

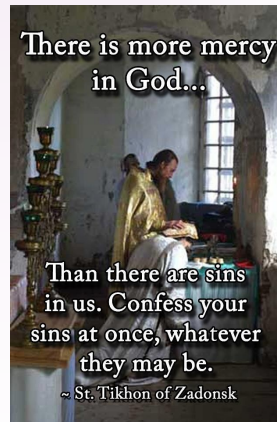
The Sacrament of Penance offers us the **healing mercy of God**—through this Sacrament we find forgiveness, peace and true reconciliation.

Jesus commanded His Apostles (and their successors, our bishops and priests) to **continue His ministry of healing and reconciliation**. When we seek God's forgiveness, He is eager to restore us to the **purity and perfection of a newly-Baptized soul**.



"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

John 20:21-23



St. Mary Catholic Church

Marie Bricher, Director of Religious Education
304 S. Adams Road, Spokane Valley, WA 99216

Phone: 509-928-3210, ext. 111
www.stmarysspokane.org
E-mail: mbricher@dioceseofspokane.org

St. Mary Catholic Church

Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation



"God loves every one of us with a depth and intensity that we can hardly begin to imagine. ... Because he loves us so much, he wants to purify us of our faults and build up our virtues so that we can have life in abundance."

Pope Benedict XVI, 4/18/10

What Should Parish Sacramental Preparation Programs Include?

Our Church's National Directory of Catechesis tells us that preparation to receive the Sacraments should:

Present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith...

Be appropriate to the age level, maturity, circumstances, etc. of those being catechized

Involve parents in the formation of their children

Focus primarily on the symbols, rituals and prayers of each Sacrament

Enable the believer to reflect on the meaning of the Sacrament

The Diocese of Spokane follows the restored order of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist. **Preparation for First Penance must precede the preparation for Confirmation and First Eucharist.**

The Diocese envisions "an extended period of catechesis ... in a parish-centered program which **includes participation of parents**. ... This catechesis may be extended over one or two years."



When is my child ready?

St. Mary Parish offers preparation for the Sacrament of Penance to children in second grade or later. "Children are ready to begin their preparation after attaining the age of discretion (about 7 years of age)." ...Children need to be able to distinguish right from wrong and be able to ask for forgiveness for their sins. Families who bring their children forward to be prepared for the Sacraments are expressing their own commitment to living as Catholics—especially to attending Sunday Mass.



What if my child needs to be Baptized?

Children over the age of 7 who need to be Baptized are prepared through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children. Children under the age of 6 may be Baptized after they and their parents are prepared. Contact Fr. Jeff or Marie to discuss your family's situation.

Why are parents asked to attend classes?

Parents are the first and foremost religious educators of their children. Their participation is vital to any parish program. This is an excellent opportunity to deepen and mature your faith as an adult. This will also help you support and guide your child's maturing faith. It also builds community between our families in the parish. While we welcome our "veteran" parents, if you have already attended meetings with one child, you do not need to attend with subsequent children—you are encouraged to volunteer as catechists for the children's sessions.

Schedule for Preparation for First Reconciliation

Sunday, January 19 (10:00-11:00am)

Session 1: God is our Loving Father

February 2 (10:00-11:00am)

2: God Reveals His Saving Plan

March 1 (10:00-11:00am)

3: Jesus Comes to Save Us

March 15 (10:00-11:00am)

4: The Church Continues

March 29 (10:00-11:00am)

5: Life in Christ

April 19 (10:00-11:00am)

6: The Sacrament of Reconciliation

May 3 (10:00-11:00am)

7: Celebrating Reconciliation

Saturday, May 30 (1:00-4:00pm)

Family Retreat: Follow God's Path

Thursday, June 4 (6:00pm)

First Reconciliation Penance Service

For our Sunday meetings, parents will drop off children in the Mary/Martha room in the parish office and then move to the Youth Center for the parent session.

Preparation Materials:

Signs of Grace: You Are Forgiven
(Augustine Institute)

Both Student Guide and Activity Book will be distributed to each student

Preparation Cost:

\$30 for materials and supplies (scholarships available, please ask if needed)

To Register:

Complete registration form & return by Jan 10. Forms available in church, parish office or print a copy from the parish website.