

LITURGY BYTES

Forgiveness & Mass



You might be wondering what the connection is between forgiveness and the Mass. Recently, I attended a Zoom workshop with one of our Auxiliary Bishops who stressed how vital it is to make it known about the forgiving elements of the Mass. This resonated with me and onto this paper for my column this week.

The three parts of the Mass that are explicitly penitential are (a) the Penitential Rite (either the Confiteor prayer is used, or the words Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy); (b) the Our Father; and (c) the doxology said before Communion – Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof...” You could probably add in a lesser way the Scriptures that call us to repentance, the homily, and even the prayers calling us to repent.

I know I can speak for myself realizing that I say the same things week after week. How about you? We stand, sit, and kneel, and make the motions, but do we think about it and how it can change our lives?

Part of what we are experiencing in the Mass is a sacrifice. Just as the priest purifies his hands as the Old Testament priest would do before offering a sacrifice, we, as the priesthood of believers, are also cleansing our hearts, hearing God and receiving the Eucharist. The Confiteor is a beautiful prayer said by all present. What is happening when we say those words? The Church teaches us that in the sacrifice, which this part of the Mass is, we actually have an opportunity to deal with the lesser sins in our lives which weaken our relationship with Christ.

So part of our preparations for Mass each week should have us thinking about the week gone by and our actions, and where we might have fallen short: *What have you thought, what did you say, what did you do, what didn't you do that you really need to bring to the Lord?* Isn't it beautiful that at every Mass we get the opportunity to deal with what weighs us down?

Next week, we will focus on the other opportunities for forgiveness in the Mass as the season of Lent draws near. In the meantime, be safe, be healthy and have a blessed week!!

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