

LITURGY BYTES

Forgiving Elements of the Mass (part 2)



Picking up with last week's topic, the forgiving parts of the Mass, we focus on Scripture and prayer. There are moments in the Liturgy of the Word when we hear about the many meal accounts with Jesus. These meals often provided the opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation. There are a couple familiar ones: Peter's denial of Jesus is forgiven, and his vocation renewed at breakfast on a beach in Galilee in John 21:15-17; and in Luke 7:44-47 the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus was forgiven of her sins because of her great love.

In the Gloria we pray *"Lord, God, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."* These words are also repeated in the Lamb of God during the Communion rite. In the very familiar Lord's Prayer (Our Father), we ask that our sins might be forgiven and that we be delivered from evil. Directly before we receive Holy Communion, we say: *"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists forgiveness of sin as one of the fruits of Holy Communion: the body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason, the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins. (CCC#1393)

However, we need to keep in mind that the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance/Confession) is the Church's very special Sacrament of pardon and peace. We do need to celebrate that Sacrament to restore our friendship with God who waits to offer His love and mercy. With the penitential season of Lent just a few weeks away, let us think during Mass about what holds us back from giving our lives away. The gesture of God's love and mercy awaits us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Have a safe, blessed, and healthy week! ~~~*Michele Hahn*