

LITURGY BYTES

Reconciliation

Since Lent is commonly referred to as a penitential season, let us look at the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance or Confession—names that all refer to the same Sacrament. This Sacrament is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of our Catholic Faith. The Sacrament “washes us clean” and renews us in Christ.



In this Sacrament we meet the loving Jesus who offers us forgiveness. We meet Christ who is eager to absolve and restore us to new life through the priest. The graces of Christ are conferred in the Sacrament by means of visible signs—signs that are acts of worship, symbols of the grace given, and recognizable gestures through which the Lord bestows his gifts. Also, through this Sacrament, the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of grace are the gifts received through the outward sign, that is, the extension of hands and words of absolution pronounced by the priest.

Perhaps this Lent, we could reflect on why we need this Sacrament. Actually, from time to time we need to recognize that we offend God and need to make things right. Like the prodigal son in the gospel, we long to know again the loving embrace of a forgiving father who patiently waits for each of us. We have a certain way available to us to access God’s mercy and to know that our sins are forgiven and that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is more to come in future weeks on how this Sacrament evolved and how it is celebrated.

Have a safe, blessed, healthy week ahead! ~~~~ *Michele Hall*