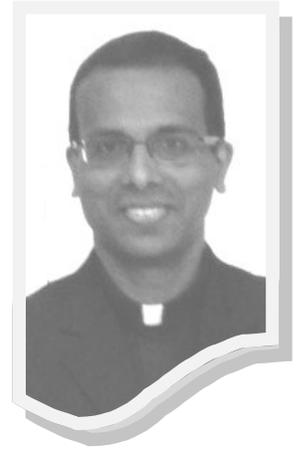




From the Pastor



Confession



ny Lenten resolution should include a determination to deepen our love for the Sacrament of Penance—Confession (or Reconciliation). This is a Sacrament, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be used frequently in our lives. It is the normal means for the forgiveness of our sins. Frequent reception of Confession is also an important means for growing in holiness and in virtues. The requirements for Catholics going to Confession are simple: we must be a sinner; we must have sorrow for our offenses; and we must be open to the amendment of our lives.

Preparation: Begin by briefly asking God the Holy Spirit to help you know your sins. Pray for the grace of sorrow for your offenses against God and neighbor. There are many worthwhile pamphlets and/or aids that provide for an “examination of conscience.” While this proximate examination for the Sacrament of Confession is necessary and helpful, the best long-term help for making a good Confession is a *daily* examination of your conscience. The daily examination of your conscience is perhaps the best help to making a good Confession.

Confession and Absolution: Jesus entrusted the holy work of forgiving sins—on behalf of God and the Church—to the ordained priest. The Church ritually established this in the Sacrament of Confession. We must acknowledge our particular sins with honesty and completeness as best we recall, and express our sorrow through some prayer of sorrow, such as the Act of Contrition. In the most absolute secrecy, the priest sits in the place of Jesus, through the ministry of the Church, offers the prayer of absolution, granting “pardon and peace.” With the absolution our sins are forgiven.

Penance and Resolution: The priest imposes a “penance” for the remission of the corporal punishment due to sin. We are obliged to fulfill our assigned penance. True sorrow for our sins, and sacramental forgiveness in Confession, does not always take away our sinful tendencies or inclinations. We often have built up bad habits, or vices, that make it difficult to change quickly. It is important for us to leave Confession with a good determination and strategy to avoid certain sins and a resolution to build up the habits of holiness in our lives.

Lent may be a particularly important moment of grace to come to Confession. Put your trust in Him and in His grace and mercy. Resolve to use Confession frequently—once a month or more—as a vehicle to strengthen and fortify your resolve to love Our Lord with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength—and to love your neighbor for His sake. **Lenten Confessions are scheduled for Tuesday, March 27th, at 6.30 p.m.**

—Fr. Jose Thomas