



We have
found
The Christ!

COME & SEE

Sacrament of Confession & Reconciliation
the 2nd plank of salvation

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.*



*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to
himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;
that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,
not counting their trespasses against them,
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

(2 Corinthians 5:17-19)



Opening Prayer

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

*All-highest, most glorious God,
cast Your light into the darkness of my heart.*

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*Give me right faith,
firm hope,
perfect charity,
and profound humility,
with wisdom, perception,
and confidence,*

- - - - -

*O Lord,
that I may do
what is truly
Your holy will.*

Amen.

Gospel Reading (Luke 15:11-24)

Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need.

So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'"



So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.'"



Reflection (Blessed John Paul II)

Christ, then, reveals God who is Father, who is "love," as St. John will express it in his first letter (1 Jn 4:16); Christ reveals God as "rich in mercy," as we read in St. Paul. (Eph 2:4)

.... On the basis of this way of manifesting the presence of God who is Father, love and mercy, Jesus makes mercy one of the principal themes of His preaching. As is His custom, He first teaches "in parables," since these express better the very essence of things. It is sufficient to recall the parable of the prodigal son, (Lk 15:11-32) or the parable of the Good Samaritan, (Lk 10:30-37) ...

There are many passages in the teaching of Christ that manifest love-mercy under some ever-fresh aspect. ...The Gospel writer who particularly treats of these themes in Christ's teaching is Luke, whose Gospel has earned the title of "the Gospel of mercy."

For Reflection

In the Gospel story on the Prodigal Son the younger son “comes to his senses.” When we return to God, we “come to our senses.”

(The passage in the original Greek says, “Returning to himself...”)

When we are far from God, we are outside of our true selves.

For Discussion

1. According to the Gospel passage: How did Jesus go about revealing the nature of the Father?
2. Imagine God, the Father, running towards you – describe that image and how it makes you feel?
3. Knowing what you now know about the loving mercy of God, how might you consider responding?

The Peace of Confession

Do you ever wish you could just start over with a clean slate?

Would you like to have a more intimate relationship with God?

Do you sometimes feel like you are at odds with everyone – even yourself?

The Church has an “app” for that.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- **Imparts** the love of God (ccc 1424)
- **Restores** us to God's grace (ccc 1468)
- **Joins** us in an intimate friendship with God (ccc 1468)
- **Reconciles** us to the Church (ccc 1469)
- **Repairs** and restores fraternal communion (ccc 1469)
- **Reconciles** us with ourselves in our inmost being (ccc 1469)

Is it any wonder the Church strongly recommends confession of everyday faults and teaches that regular confession helps form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, lets us be healed by Christ, and enables us to progress in the life of the Spirit?

Why a Sacrament of...

This Sacrament has many names which reveals the abundant graces it bestows:

- ❖ **Sacrament of *conversion***: it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion.
- ❖ **Sacrament of *penance***: it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial penance and satisfaction.
- ❖ **Sacrament of *confession***: it is a profound acknowledgment and praise of the holiness of God and of his mercy.
- ❖ **Sacrament of *forgiveness***: by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants pardon and peace.
- ❖ **Sacrament of *reconciliation***: because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles us to himself and to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Conversion of the Baptized: Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.**" (Mk 1:15) In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith

in the Gospel and by Baptism (Cf. Acts 2:38) that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.

Second Conversion: Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal." This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first. (Ps 51:17; cf. Jn 6:44; 12:32; 1 Jn 4:10)

St. Peter's conversion after he had denied his master three times bears witness to this. Jesus' look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter and, after the Lord's resurrection; a threefold affirmation of love for him. (Lk 22:61; Jn 21:15-17) The second conversion also has a communitarian dimension, as is clear in the Lord's call to a whole Church: "Repent!" (Rev 2:5, 16)

...Reconciliation after Baptism?

Interior Penance: Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the **conversion of the heart, interior conversion**. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance. (Cf. Joel 2:12-13; Isa 1:16-17; Mt 6:1-6; 16-18)

Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace.

The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart. (Cf. Ezek 36:26-27) Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that we may be restored!" (Lam 5:21) God gives us the strength to begin anew.

*Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church,
(#1423-1444).*

It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have pierced. (Cf. Jn 19:37; Zech 12:10)

Only God forgives sin: Only God forgives sins. (Cf. Mk 2:7) Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven." (Mk 2:5, 10; Lk 7:48) Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name. (Cf. Jn 20:21-23)

Reconciliation with the Church: During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them. A remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus receives sinners at his table, a gesture that expresses in an astonishing way both God's forgiveness and the return to the bosom of the People of God. (Cf. Lk 15; 19:9)

Notes

Closing Prayer

(Psalm 51:3-12)

*Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;
in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.*

*Thoroughly wash away my guilt;
and from my sin cleanse me.*

*For I know my transgressions;
my sin is always before me.*

*Against you, you alone have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your eyes
So that you are just in your word,
and without reproach in your judgment.*

*Behold, I was born in guilt,
in sin my mother conceived me.*

*Behold, you desire true sincerity;
and secretly you teach me wisdom.*

*Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

*You will let me hear gladness and joy;
the bones you have crushed will rejoice.*

*Turn away your face from my sins;
blot out all my iniquities.*

*A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.*

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