



Cluster Penance Service

Sunday, March 26th

2:00pm

Mary, Queen of Peace Church
200 Lawrence Rd., Salem, NH

There will be many priests available for
Confession

Come and experience the Merciful and
Healing Love of God

A Conversation on Confession



What is Confession? Where is Confession found in the Bible?

Parishioner: (I'll defer to Father Von for a formal definition but here is my attempt) Confession is us reconciling with God. Grave, "mortal" sin breaks our communion with God (cuts the fiber optic chord so to speak) and we need the Sacrament of Reconciliation to reconnect us. Venial sin doesn't completely cut us off from God, however, it still wounds our relationship (a fraying of the chord so to speak). Therefore, a build-up of venial sin can lead to more grave issues and still requires repair through Reconciliation."

Father Von: We read about the Sacrament of Reconciliation in John 20, just after the resurrection of Jesus. He appears to the disciples in the upper room, breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:22-23). This is a sign that God gives the humans, the apostles, the ability to forgive sins. We also read in the letter of James that, in the context of speaking of the presbyters (the priests), that we are to confess our sins to one another (James 5:13-16). This gift of Confession, given to us by Jesus Himself, has been given for our healing, our life and our growth. What a great way to get closer to God -- He Himself meets us in the confessional and He Himself tells us, "I forgive you."

There are five parts to the Sacrament:

Examination of Conscience: Prior to and in preparation for confession, we reflect on our thoughts, words, and deeds and identify areas where we have fallen short.

Parishioner: I typically use the car ride to confession to reflect and I usually spend a few minutes reflecting in church prior to going to the confession.

Confession: When we bring our sins and failings before God in the confessional and ask for His forgiveness.

Penance: After presenting our sins to God, the priest, acting as God's intermediary, will discuss an act of penance or reparation for our sins, whether it be prayer, action, reflection, or other to be completed by the Penitent following confession.

Act of Contrition: After discussion with the priest, one will recite the "Act of Contrition" prayer. There are several versions available.

Parishioner: I admittedly can never memorize the Act of Contrition, so I usually write it on a piece of paper to bring with me (or St. Pat's also has it printed out for you in the confessional.)

Absolution: At the end of the Sacrament, the priest performs the act of absolution where he washes away our sin in God's name.

Have you considered accepting God's invitation for Reconciliation recently?