

Power of Confession and Forgiveness

This weekend marks the beginning of “**The Jubilee Year of Mercy**” as proclaimed by Pope Francis. It is a year of reconciliation between brothers and sisters of all walks of life, conversion, and a time to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Consequently, it is a time of solidarity, hope, justice and commitment to serve God with joy and in peace with our brothers and sisters.

It calls for personal reflection and to re-discover the true meaning of our faith and what we are all called to do as Catholics every day. No matter where we are in our spiritual life, we all need continuous spiritual conversion to bring us closer to our God and all that He has to offer us.

The responsibility of being merciful, does not rest only on Bishops, Priests, Deacons and all religious but on each and every one of us as well. **No one** is exempt who is a believer in Christ. We are **ALL** called to live the Gospel.

I first experienced His mercy many years ago, at a special moment in my life, when I turned back to my faith. I was ignorant of my faith and over time I began to learn the true teachings of Christ through scripture and prayer. During this time, I realized that I have been offending my Lord by the things I have done and failed to do, all the time thinking I was a good person. I had been listening to the world instead of Jesus. I began to reflect on my life truthfully and realized my salvation was in jeopardy. It was time to go to confession - you see it was over thirty years since my last confession and it was not something I was comfortable with. When I got up the courage to go, I entered the confessional and when the sliding panel opened, I told the priest that I was very nervous and would need a lot of help. He was very compassionate and guided me and when it was finished, I realized how much my sins had weighed on my life because I was now filled with so much joy and peace in my heart I knew He had forgiven me. I was no longer a good person listening to the world, I was a sinner, listening to Christ and in constant need of His forgiveness and mercy whenever I failed to live according to His teachings- I am in a much better place now and I am truly grateful for His continuing mercy.

This year offers a time of grace in our faith and our church. Pope Francis, in this declaration, is reaching out to all walks of life to change the way we think and live our lives for the greater good of all humanity and an opportunity to show the world what it means to be Catholic. It is a time to forgive and rebuild our church with hope, love and compassion. It is truly a time of spiritual conversion. Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount: “**Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs**”. We all need mercy whether we realize it or not. It is only when we recognize the truth that we have sinned and ask for forgiveness that we will receive mercy. It shows we are repenting of heart.

Today, after each mass, we are offering a book titled” **Everybody Needs to Forgive Somebody**” It is eleven, short, true stories from all walks of life. It is an easy read. We ask that each family take one and share it and when completed pass it along to someone who may need inspiration.

It is our hope, as we begin this year of mercy, we as a parish community, will begin to foster the continuous need for forgiveness and create a community of love, hope, compassion and welcoming to all who pass through our doors. A people that recognizes that we are all human and are all in need of mercy. Let this be the beginning of a new chapter in our journey back to God.

Let us Pray - **Lord Jesus we ask that the Holy Spirit touch each one of us this day and ignite a fire in our hearts and bring change to each of us, so that we may foster a greater love throughout our broken world. May He keep us vigilant to always be open to opportunities to be merciful - as He is merciful to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Gene Cunningham-Parishioner