

Fr. Martin's Reflection – March 27, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our gospel this Sunday is the parable of The Prodigal Son. Many of us have heard this parable before and we love the concept of God's willingness to always welcome us and forgive us. And there we leave it – the concept of God's forgiveness – for many of us we don't experience it, not because God doesn't give it, it's because we don't seek it.

Why is it we don't seek God's forgiveness? We may have had a bad experience in confession – it may have been so long ago that we have forgotten how to go to confession. Maybe we feel the sins we have committed are 'unforgivable.' Or the saddest thing of all, we don't believe we need forgiveness.

Overriding all of this is our concept of confession. Ask anyone, how would you describe confession, and the focus would be on telling God your sins or telling the priest your sins. Neither are true. God already knows your sins and the priest has enough sins of his own to work on that your sins are not really his business.

So, what is the purpose of confession? Let's look at it like this: if we were preparing to go somewhere important, we would spend some time before the mirror, either shaving or putting on makeup. As we get older, we notice things about our features that we are not too happy about, an extra grey hair here or more and more wrinkles under the eyes, etc. The mirror helps us see ourselves, and if possible, we can make changes to our features or change the color of our hair to help us learn to love and live with ourselves.

I see confession as a spiritual mirror. When we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation it's not for God's benefit, or the priest's benefit, it is for our benefit. God already knows us. God knows all about our gifts and talents and what it is that we can achieve. God also knows that some of our life choices can prevent us from reaching our goals and potential. God wants us to see what God sees in us – our giftedness, beauty, and our potential. God also wishes for us to see what prevents us from reaching our goals and that is why God gave us the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation – the spiritual mirror that helps us to see how sin hurts and destroys each of us. Through this sacrament God gives us the opportunity to see ourselves as God see us and shows us how we can change in such a way that will bring healing to ourselves and bring healing to our relationships, and live a much happier and healthier life. The role of the priest is to speak on behalf of God and for you to hear and experience God's love and forgiveness.

Every Saturday we have confessions at Holy Assumption Church, Roebling from 3:00-3:45 pm. And St. Mary Church, Bordentown from 4:00-4:45 pm. Our Lenten confessions are at St. Mary Church, Bordentown on Tuesday, April 12 from 6:30—7:30 pm and Holy Assumption Church, Roebling, on Wednesday, April 13 from 6:30—7:30pm.

I hope you will take this opportunity to experience God's love and forgiveness and allow yourself to be the person God knows you can be.

Fr. Martin