

## Fr. Martin's Reflection – February 5, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This coming week our 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders will celebrate their First Confession. The idea of telling someone our faults and failings can be somewhat daunting. It seems we have a stand-alone sacrament that just focuses on all that we do wrong, that makes us nervous and anxious. Why would God do such a thing?

I feel the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) has been painted in a very poor or unfortunate light. I know when I was growing up, Confession was about how sinful and bad I was and we had to go to Confession at least once a month. It can leave a person feeling quite bad about themselves.

I began to look at all that God had given us and it was all good, so why did Confession seem to be the outlier? Then I took a closer look and began to realize that I was using the Sacrament of Confession the wrong way, not the way God wanted us to use this wonderful sacrament. We have been told that we need to tell God our sins and we need to receive God's forgiveness. This is somewhat true, but not because God is sitting waiting to know what it is that we have done wrong, God already knows. God wants us to realize what it is that we have done wrong, realize how our sinfulness affects, not God, but how it affects me and others.

Many of you that have had me as your confessor would have heard me describe Confession as a spiritual mirror. Like all mirrors, they assist us in looking at ourselves. What's that mark on my cheek, is my collar sticking up, or do I have some curry on my chin? A mirror helps us see things so we can fix it. Confession, our spiritual mirror, is an opportunity to take a look at one's faith and spiritual life and to ask the question: how am I doing? How am I doing at work, how am I doing at home, and the most important question of all, - God, how are we doing? So, what's the curry stain at work? Am I short with my workmates, do I gossip about them, am I dishonest with them, or do I blame them for my mistakes? What are the sticky issues at home? Am I bringing home my work issues and offloading them onto my family, or am I hurting my family in other ways, drinking, drugs, gambling, or hanging with my buddies too much? The spiritual mirror allows us to see all of this.

What makes God happy, isn't that we have confessed. As I said already, God already knows. What makes God happy is when we look in the spiritual mirror and recognize the stains that cause hurt to oneself and to others and promise to change, to make a better effort to live a better life. When we use the gifts and talents that God has given to us for the betterment of oneself and for the betterment of others, that's what makes God happy. Our spiritual mirror/confession helps us to reach our fullest potential by helping us see the curry stains that hold us back or the marks of life that fill us with insecurity.

Come, take a good look in your Spiritual Mirror and see the stains that hold you and others back.

May God bless you with a wonderful week.

*Fr. Martin*

