



**St. Patrick's Church, Belfast
Diocese of Down and Connor**

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confessors are available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the Year of Mercy. Anyone who has hesitated to approach the Sacrament for some time is especially welcome to avail of the opportunity to make a good confession and receive forgiveness for their sins.

Fridays: 7pm to 8pm (Holy Hour of Mercy)

**Saturday: 12noon to 1pm;
6pm to 7pm**

Why go to Confession?

Pope Francis, during a recent audience with pilgrims in St. Peter's Square, encouraged everyone to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

‘Everyone say to himself: ‘When was the last time I went to confession?’ And if it has been a long time, don’t lose another day! Go, the priest will be good. And Jesus, (will be) there, and Jesus is better than the priests - Jesus receives you. He will receive you with so much love! Be courageous, and go to confession,’’ urged the Pope.

Acknowledging a popular objection to the sacrament, Pope Francis noted, ‘someone can say, ‘I confess my sins only to God.’ Yes, you can say to God, ‘forgive me,’ and say your sins. But our sins are also against our brothers, against the Church. This is why it is necessary to ask forgiveness of the Church and of our brothers, in the person of the priest.’

‘While the celebration of the sacrament is personal, it is rooted in the universality of the Church,’ which ‘accompanies us on the path of conversion,’ he explained.

‘Forgiveness is not something we can give ourselves,’ cautioned the Pope. ‘One asks forgiveness, one asks it of another person, and in confession, we ask forgiveness from Jesus.’

‘Forgiveness is not a result of our efforts, but is a gift. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit who showers us with mercy and grace that pours forth unceasingly from the open heart of Christ crucified and risen.’

The Pontiff went on to recognize that many people feel ashamed at the idea of confessing their sins and might say, 'but Father, I am embarrassed!'

'Even embarrassment is good. It's healthy to have a bit of shame... it does us good, because it makes us more humble.'

'Don't be afraid of confession,' Pope Francis stressed. 'When someone is in line for confession he feels all these things - even shame - but then, when he finishes confessing, he leaves (feeling) free, great, beautiful, forgiven, clean, happy.'

'The sacrament of reconciliation is a sacrament of healing,' he pointed out.

'When I go to confession, it's for healing: healing the soul, healing the heart because of something that I did to make it unwell.'

The Pope pointed to the biblical story of Jesus healing a paralyzed man, which expresses the 'profound link' between 'forgiveness and healing,' since 'the Lord Jesus is revealed at the same time as the physician of soul and body.'

He also recounted the parable of the prodigal son, who sought his father's forgiveness and was welcomed home with open arms.

'But I say to you,' he stressed to the many pilgrims, 'every time we go to confession, God embraces us.'

Preparing for Confession

The Story of the Rich Young Man

Mk 10:17-22

He was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good' No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not give false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these since my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and he was filled with love for him, and he said, 'You need to do one thing more. Go sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.'

The rich young man knelt before Jesus.

Do I acknowledge Jesus in my life?

Do I make space for God?

Do I seek, respect and respond to his Word?

The rich young man wanted to inherit eternal life.

Do I want to be close to Jesus always?

Do I want to do the best I can with the gift of my life?

Do I believe that I can accept the gift of heaven by the way I live on earth?

Jesus asked the rich young man did he keep the Ten Commandments.

Do I keep the Ten Commandments?

Do I realise that rather than stopping me doing things they free me to be myself?

Do I respect myself as the beautiful creation that God made me?

Jesus looked steadily at the rich young man and loved him.

Do I believe that Jesus looks at me and loves me?

Do I believe that Jesus invites me to share in his life?

Do I believe that Jesus believes in me?

Jesus told the rich young man to sell everything he had and give the money to the poor.

Do I make space for Jesus in my life through loving and caring for others, especially my family?

Do I recognise the face of Jesus in those who are marginalised, disrespected, those who live in poverty and those who are vulnerable?

Do I recognise everybody in the world as my sister or brother equal in the eyes of God?

Jesus told the rich young man to follow him.

Do I believe that Jesus has a plan for my life?

Do I make an effort to discover that plan?

Do I trust Jesus enough to accept his plan?

The rich young man went away sad.

Do I choose the way of Jesus or do my own thing?

Do I accept that sins brings sadness?

Do I accept that true happiness can only be found in Jesus?

In other words do I allow God to be God in my life and do I welcome Jesus into my life?

The Rite Of Confession

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Bless me Father for I have sinned.

It is since my last confession.

These are my sins

For these and all my sins I am truly sorry.

The Act Of Sorrow

O my God,

Thank you for loving me.

I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you.

Help me to live like Jesus and not to sin again. Amen.

www.saintpatricksbelfast.org.uk

www.downandconnor.org

www.im.va