



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

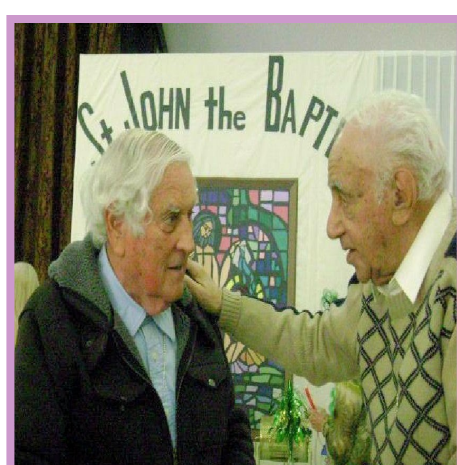
Reconciliation/Penance

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The sacrament of penance is also called the sacrament of reconciliation, the sacrament of conversion, or confession. Christ instituted this sacrament immediately after his resurrection as stated in John 20:21-23 given below.

The Sacrament of Baptism washes away original sin and any sins committed before baptism; the Sacrament of Penance forgives sins committed after baptism. We can acknowledge our sins privately and ask for God's mercy and forgiveness. However, when we are conscious of a serious or mortal sin, we are bound by Jesus and the Church to go to confession (1John 5:16-17).

Ask yourself: If Jesus meant that we should not go to confession to a priest, that we should only confess privately in our room; what is the relevance of the singular action of Jesus bestowing on the Apostles and



The reproach of Nathan and the penance of King David (Paris Psalter, folio 136v, 10th century). 2 Samuel 12:1-13



His Church the power to forgive and retain sins? In truth, approached with a reverent attitude, the sacrament of penance is a sure guarantee our sins are forgiven.

Sin separates us from God, our fellow human beings, and the Church. This sacrament of mercy reconciles us to God, our fellow human beings, and gives us the grace to continue to seek the narrow path. Through a priest acting on Christ's behalf administering this Sacrament, we return to God like prodigal sons and daughters, and receive healing, reorientation, and true conversion.

Biblical References

Jesus said to them [the Apostles] again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained (John 20:21-23).

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Teaching of the Church

It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin. It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction. It is called the sacrament of confession, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense, it is also a "confession" - acknowledgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man. It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace." It is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1423-1424).

Forgive Me Father

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