



Looking for Jesus in Confession

During Lent, we approach the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as the way of returning to the Father who restores for us the dignity of our Baptism and the full privilege of being adopted as His children. An integral confession calls us to spend time examining our conscience, not only remembering those material sins which we have committed, but also allowing God's Spirit to probe the depths of our hearts to uncover our unrecognized wounds and unclaimed motives. Discerning why we commit the sins in our life helps us to be open more

fully to the redeeming work of Christ through this Sacrament. The most important component of Confession is contrition, sorrow for our sins, which comes only when we make a good and honest self-examination before we enter the confessional.

PRAYER

Have I prayed as I ought? Has God been at the center of my life? How I have ignored God and His divine inspiration? Have I listened attentively to God's voice in the Sacred Liturgy? Have I been faithful to my obligation for Sunday Mass and Holy Days? Do I prepare myself and those entrusted to my care for Mass? Am I lazy or complacent in prayer? Do I pray for my loved ones and my enemies? Is my prayer self-centered? Have I explored the rich spirituality of the Catholic Tradition and its many ways of devotion? Do I spend time in prayer before the Most Blessed Sacrament?

PENANCE

Have I made Fridays throughout the year a day of penance? If I eat meat, do I do another act of penance? Do I fast throughout the year? Do I willingly abstain from those unnecessary things which clutter my life? Does noise make me deaf to others and to God? Am I aware of the ways in which my sins make me unworthy of my wonderful

vocation as a Christian? Am I humbled by the love and goodness of God in my life? Do I see my faith as a gift and not a burden? Do I receive Holy Communion worthily? Do I have a sense of entitlement or superiority? Do I exercise my body and mind? Do I live a healthy lifestyle?

CHARITY

Do I give of myself freely and generously to others? Do I forgive those who have harmed me? Do I give others the benefit of the doubt? Do I judge the motives of others? Am I faithful to my obligations to my family, to my parish, to those in need? Do I give from my surplus or my want? Do I trust that God will reward a cheerful giver? Am I sensitive to the sufferings of others? Do I allow myself to acknowledge the many persons I encounter each day? Do I hold opinions which bring harm to others? Do I make decisions which are contrary to Catholic moral teaching? Do I desire the admiration and praise of others? Do I love myself enough to study and grow in my faith? Have I been a good steward of creation and the created goods entrusted to me?



Looking for Jesus in Lenten Traditions

The following are the guidelines for the observance of Lent:

PRAYING. Catholics are encouraged to pray more during Lent, especially with Sacred Scripture. Spiritual reading, such as the lives of the saints, and devotions like the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Rosary are helpful to spiritual growth. Lent is also an ideal time to receive properly the Sacrament of Penance in preparation for the celebration of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

FASTING. Catholics aged 14 and older are to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. In addition, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics aged 18-59 are required to fast, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals each day not equal to the full meal.

ALMSGIVING. Moved by the sacrifice of Christ and the suffering of humanity, many Christians combine almsgiving with fasting, giving to the poor the money they saved by eating, drinking or buying less as they rely more upon God's abundant grace. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy provide ample inspiration for other ways to sacrifice time and resources for those most in need of help.



Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Grant me the grace to be renewed during this observance of Holy Lent. Armed with prayer, penance, and almsgiving, may I lay aside those things which hinder my search for You!