



Essential Evangelization

Reconciliation

As Catholic Christians, Lent is a great time of year to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Did you know that Catholics have been practicing this great celebration of God's love for over 2 centuries? This practice exists from the time that Jesus walked the earth as a visible sign of this sacrament and of the Eucharist. Originally Christians used to practice the sacrament of "confession" in a public forum, but it has evolved over the years to private one-on-one with the priest, to that of the currently popular communal celebration in the presence of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We sometimes celebrate Reconciliation in a group setting because all sin is social, and has a "horizontal" dimension as well as the vertical offense against God. As Scripture tells us, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." For grave or mortal sins, one-on-one is still the encouraged form.

Even though it can be a very humbling experience, it is also one of the most liberating and beautiful signs of God's love for us. Our protestant brothers and sisters don't normally understand why we have to tell our sins to a priest. But it is really God to whom we are confessing (not that He does not already know our sins!), and the priest acts as His authority on earth. In the Gospel of John, Jesus breathes on the Apostles and sends them out as the Father had sent Him saying, "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." And how would the Apostles know what sins to forgive? Only if they were told to them! In 2 Corinthians 5, St. Paul also tells us that the Apostles are the first ambassadors for Christ to continue His work of reconciliation on earth.

Did you know that our former great Pope John II went to confession weekly? This should be a great encouragement for all of us. Like the father of the prodigal son, Our Lord is patiently looking down the road and waiting for us to return "home." Do yourself a great favor this week and celebrate the gift! You will be so glad you did!!!

*This is one of a series of articles on
Evangelization from the
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