

TREASURES of OUR FAITH

by: Deacon Ryan Adams

Greetings brothers and sisters. As we go through this 'Year of Faith', each week we will take a journey together to deepen and rediscover our faith as Catholic Christians. We will take time to look at the rich traditions of our Church, we'll look at what certain things signify and their symbolism, take time to answer some frequently asked questions and look at why we do certain things as Catholics. This week we'll look at Penance/Reconciliation.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).

"Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion."

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 humankind.

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. The person who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: Go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister.

God loves us so much, He so wants to have a close, loving relationship with each and every one of us, that he gave us this amazing gift of reconciliation.

God in his mercy, ensures that every human being is given the opportunity to embrace His forgiveness, God want's every one of us to be fulfilled by His love.

Jesus stressed the importance of this need for forgiveness when he taught us how to pray to God our Father. In the Lord's prayer we ask; "forgive **us** our trespasses", but then Jesus adds some responsibility on us as well, ...that **we** also "forgive those who trespass against us". The rite of penance is such a beautiful and powerful way for us to reconcile ourselves with God. It is also a powerful way for us to reconcile ourselves with our neighbors. Through this gift of reconciliation, we can bring some much needed peace into our lives.