

Forgiveness of our sins is not something that we can give ourselves. In Confession, we ask forgiveness from Jesus. Forgiveness is not the fruit of our own efforts but rather a gift, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit who fills us with the wellspring of mercy and of grace that flows unceasingly from the open heart of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

However, it is not enough to simply ask the Lord for forgiveness in one's own mind and heart because Jesus himself entrusted to the Church the ministry of the forgiveness of sins. It is necessary humbly and trustingly to confess one's sins to a minister of the Church. In the celebration of this Sacrament, the priest represents not only God but also the whole community.

The shame we might feel confessing our sins to another makes us more humble, as we unburden ourselves before God. When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, happy. This is the beauty of Confession!

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a profound gift that strengthens our personal relationship with Christ, heals us, and renews our baptism when we were first incorporated into the community of faith.

The Sacrament of Penance or Confession is, in fact, like a 'second baptism' that refers back always to the first to strengthen and renew it. In this sense, the day of our Baptism is the point of departure for this most beautiful journey, a journey towards God that lasts a lifetime, a journey of conversion that is continually sustained by the Sacrament of Penance. Think about this: when we go to confess our weaknesses, our sins, we go to ask the pardon of Jesus, but we also go to renew our Baptism through his forgiveness. And this is beautiful, it is like celebrating the day of Baptism in every Confession."

With the help of St Paul we can examine ourselves through the prism of love:

**Love is patient; love is kind
Love is not envious or boastful
Love is not arrogant or rude
Love does not insist on its own way
Love is not irritable or resentful
Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing
Love rejoices in the truth
Love bears all things
Love hopes all things
Love endures all things.**

(1 Corinthians 13:4-10)

Some texts on forgiveness:

Matthew 18:21-22 – Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?" "No, not seven times but seventy times seven."

Luke 1:17 – Go tell the people that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

Hebrews 8:12 – I will forgive their sins and will no longer remember their wrongs.

Ephesians 4:32 – Instead be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.