

LENTEN PRACTICES

10 Meditations for a Good Confession

By Fr. Ed Broom, OMV
Catholic Exchange.com

One of the greatest blessings and gifts that flow out of the loving and pierced Sacred Heart of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is His mercy expressed most deeply through the Sacrament of Confession, also called Sacrament of Pardon, Reconciliation, Penance as well as Sacrament of God's Mercy. Words that produce inexplicable peace, joy, consolation and hope are those that the Catholic priest expresses in absolution at the end of the Sacrament of Mercy: *"And I absolve you of your sins: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. My son, your sins are forgiven; go in peace!"* The interior knowledge that all of my sins have been totally and completely erased, obliterated, wiped out and forgiven by the Blood that Jesus shed for me on Calvary produces a joy and peace that goes beyond the ability that human words can express!

Luke 15:11-32. PRODIGAL SON: Read and pray over the Parable of the Prodigal Son before going to Confession. Beg for the grace to understand what God really wants you to learn from this spiritual masterpiece. Every time you read and meditate upon this spiritual gem and masterpiece, God will enrich you with new and deeper insights.

PSALM 51 Pray this psalm before and after going to confession. This is the heartfelt Act of Contrition that King David prayed after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered Urias, the innocent man. Beg for the grace to have true repentance for your sins. True sorrow and heartfelt contrition is essential to making a good confession.

JOHN 20:21-23. Read and pray over the institution of the sacrament of Confession that first night when the Apostles were in the Upper Room and Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit saying: *"Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall forgive they shall be forgiven; whose sins you shall bind shall be held bound."* We should be exceedingly thankful for this great gift bestowed upon the Church and its members the same day we celebrate His victorious triumph over death, the day of His Resurrection from the dead.

JOHN 21: 15-19. Read and meditate on this conversation between Jesus and Peter. After the Apostles make the miraculous catch of fish, Jesus walks with Peter along the shore and asks him three times if he really loves Him. Peter is making reparation for the three times he denied Jesus shortly after the Last Supper. Pray for the grace to be truly repentant for your sins and make a perfect act of contrition of love.

Luke 15:1-7. The Good Shepherd leaves the 99 to pursue the one lost sheep. Recognize that you are the lost sheep and you have great value in God's eyes. Your soul has infinite value in the eyes of God. You were redeemed not by the blood of lambs or goats, nor bought back by gold or silver, but redeemed and ransomed by the Blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

John 10. Jesus is the Good Shepherd that goes after the lost sheep. However, once you have experienced the loving embrace of Jesus the Good Shepherd, it is up to you to be a Good Shepherd for the sheep that Jesus has put in your charge. The key to being a Good Shepherd is, first, to be good sheep, to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow Him.

Luke 23:39-43. JESUS & THE GOOD THIEF: In this passage, firmly believe that the worst of all sinners can actually become the greatest of all saints if we simply trust. Say, JESUS I TRUST IN YOU... JESUS I TRUST IN YOU... JESUS I TRUST IN YOU. Venerable Fulton J. Sheen poignantly asserts: *"And the good thief died a thief because He stole heaven."* Proclaim from the rooftops the infinite mercy of God, even to those who believe that their sin goes beyond His mercy!

Mt. 8:1-4 HEALING OF THE LEPER: Every Sacrament has a specific sacramental grace—that of Confession is HEALING! Jesus came to cure and heal the sick, all of the sick that trusted in Him. We have to see ourselves in the leper. Sin is leprosy and all of us are sinners. As Jesus touched and healed the leper, so He can touch and heal us if we allow Him.

GALATIANS 5:16-26. Saint Paul contrasts those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the flesh will have a harvest of corruption and death. Those who live according to the Spirit will experience the fruits of the Spirit and experience eternal life. Confession helps us to put to death the works of the flesh and to be led by the Holy Spirit.

John 11. LAZARUS EXPERIENCE: Saint Augustine compares Confession to Lazarus. Lazarus was dead and buried for four days before Jesus brought him back to life. What happens spiritually in Confession is the same. We leave our old life of sin, our spiritual death in the Confessional (the bandages symbolize our sins) and we rise to new life in the Spirit.

I pray that these Biblical passages will shed new light on the sacrament of Confession. I hope it serves as a jumping board to launch you and me into the confessional so that we may experience the infinite ocean of God's mercy.

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ESTABLISHED 1923

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

STAFF

Pastor
Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.
Associate Pastor
Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.
Office Manager
Virginia Fong
Pastoral Coordinator
Bertilla Watanabe
Bookkeeper
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OLPH School Principal
Lora Clarke

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

February 28, 2016

3rd Sunday of Lent

Dear Parishioners,

Lent is certainly a time to experience the graces that flow from God's mercy. These blessings flow when we empty ourselves of some of the comforts and securities that we get so used to. No doubt some of you may be feeling the withdrawal pangs of giving up chocolate and sweets or that grande latte from Starbucks! We are almost midway through Lent... let us press on!

If you have not as yet started your Lenten practices, it's not too late. It's never too late! You must have read Pope Francis' Guide to Lent we featured two weeks ago in the bulletin. He says fasting must not be superficial. His point was that fasting and self-denial are recommended but the greater things to fast from are indifference towards others. When we fast from indifference, we can feast on love.

That's why when our parish gets involved in community outreach efforts, I get excited. Social justice and outreach work are well-supported by our parishioners and I hope to continue our efforts in this direction. It's also something I would like to see our youth get involved in. We are currently in the process of discerning how we can get young people of our parish engaged in working, sharing and praying together so that they may be able to put their gifts toward the service of those in need and, in the process, mature into thinking, caring adults who contribute in an earnest, Spirit-inspired way to society.

For those in RCIA, we will pray the Scrutinies with them in the coming weeks at the morning Mass. It is a time of purification and self-searching which began with the Rite of Election two Sundays ago. At Mass, the Elect will be invited to come forward so that the whole assembly may pray for them in a solemn way.

Let us join them in spirit on this journey towards self-renewal and repentance so that we may fully allow God to enter into our lives. May the Blessed Virgin Mary be our guide and protector on this journey.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R

The Lord is merciful and gracious. - Psalm 120

NEWS & NOTICES

Parish Tax Receipts: Thank you for your generous contributions in 2015. Tax receipts from the church are available for pick-up from the Parish Office anytime Mon-Fri 9am-4pm beginning Feb. 29.

Knights of Columbus Initiation: The First Degree (Initiation) Exemplification for Knights of Columbus Candidates will take place here on Tuesday March 1, 2016. Registration is at 7:00 - 7:30 PM in the Madonna Room and Exemplification will follow in the Hall. The OLPH Knights of Columbus Council is to be formed soon after this Degree, so men please take advantage of this opportunity to be a Charter Member.

Welcome Net Ministries: We welcome members of NET ministries arriving this week to facilitate the Confirmation Retreat for Grade 7 students. NET members and Gr. 7 will be in the church, hall and Madonna Room this Wednesday to carry out their activities. Thank you to the families who have so kindly offered to host them. Let us pray for our Grade 7 students preparing for Confirmation.

Madonna Group Meeting: As the Hall and Madonna Room will be occupied for the Grade 7 Retreat, please note that the Madonna Group will meet on the following Wednesday, March 9, at 12:30pm.

CWL Members: Membership renewal for 2016 is due. Please place the \$30 fee with your name into an envelope marked "CWL" and drop it into the collection basket.

Lenten Prayer Series: The churches around our parish will gather for a series of Lenten Vigils at noon on Wednesdays for half an hour followed by soup and bread during Lent. The next one on March 2nd is at West Point Grey United Church 4595 W.8th Ave. March 16 is our turn to host.

Retrouvaille Vancouver Spring 2016 Program: Retrouvaille is an affordable program that provides couples with the tools to repair ALL kinds of marriage crises. Rediscover romance and a joyful married life! Retrouvaille has helped thousands of couples avoid separation and rekindle their relationship. You or your spouse do not need to be Catholic to attend. For confidential information or to register for the 7-week Lower Mainland program, starting the weekend of April 1 - 3, call 604-530-6710, email vancouverbc@retrouvaille.org or visit www.HelpOurMarriageBC.com

Spring Retreat: There is a Spring Retreat April 1-3, 2016 sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services at Westminster Abbey in Mission, BC. The Retreat Master is Fr. Bill Comerford C.Ss.R. and the Theme is "Mary, Mother of Merciful Love". For information and to register Call Lennie David at 604-597-8227.

ONE Conference 2016 - In the Father's Mercy: The Church's mission is to make disciples of us all and you're invited. Hear inspirational messages from world class speakers and visit local ministry exhibits on Saturday, March 5, from 9-5:30pm at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased online at rcav.org/one or at any parish.

Catholic After Hours: Presenting 'The Tonight Show with Fr. James!! What tensions exist between balancing faith, career, and social endeavours for young Catholics these days? Find out on Monday, Feb. 29, from 6:15pm to 8:30pm at the Art Gallery Cafe, downtown Vancouver (entrance on Robson Street). Fr. James, pastor at St. Patrick's Parish, puts the spotlight on four young Catholic professionals: Makani Marquis, Lisa Marquis, Jeremy Keong and Erin McDougall. To register, visit rcav.org/catholic-after-hours.

Stewardship Reflection

"He said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none.'" (Luke 13:7)

Are you like the barren fig tree? How will you respond when God asks you what you have done with all the gifts He has given you? Remember, not only are we called to be generous, we are called to develop and nurture our gifts and return with increase.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

JUBILEE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Parish Snowshoe Trip

Join us for snowshoeing today, Sunday morning, at Cypress. We'll meet at 10:30am at the front steps of the Church. The hike will take about 4 hours. Bring your own snowshoes or rent them at Cypress. For more info, call Gerry Macken 604-218-5618.

Healing Mass & Potluck Supper

A Healing Mass and the Anointing of the Sick will be held on Monday Feb 29 at 4pm. This will be followed by a potluck supper. To help those who are organizing this supper, please indicate on the sign-up sheet at the front of the church what sort of food item you will be bringing that day.

MARCH EVENTS

Parish Mission: In the Desert with Jesus

Mark your calendar for the Parish Mission starting on Sunday Mar 13 at 6pm followed by Mon - Wed Mar 14-16 at 7pm. The mission is led by Fr. Eugene "Red" O'Reilly.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SCHEDULE

Sunday March 20

-Palm Sunday Blessings of Palms and Procession at all Masses
-Reconciliation Service 2pm

Wednesday March 23

-Chrism Mass at Holy Rosary Cathedral 5pm

Holy Thursday March 24

-Mass of the Lord's Supper 7pm
-Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament till 10pm

Good Friday March 25

-Noon Prayer followed by soup & bread in the hall: 12 noon
-Celebration of the Lord's Passion: 3pm
-Stations of the Cross: 7pm

Holy Saturday March 25

-9am Morning Prayer
-Confessions: 4-5pm
-Easter Vigil 8:30pm

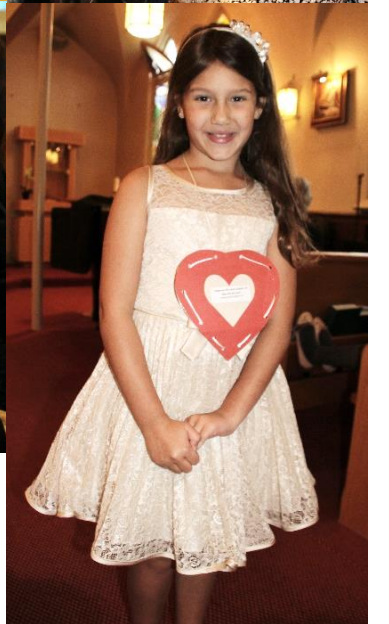
Easter Sunday March 26

Usual Mass Times



MEETING THE LORD AT RECONCILIATION

The first time that Grade 2 and PREP children encountered the Lord at Reconciliation to celebrate God's mercy was a beautiful and memorable event. The theme for the children's penitential service was "A Celebration of God's Love and Care for Us." The parable of the Good Shepherd searching out his little sheep was reflected in the choice of hymns and the lovely decorations in the hall for the reception. The names of all the children were written on adorable little cut-outs of lambs with wooly coats. The children also received heart shapes that symbolized their newly restored relationship of love with their heavenly Father. Thank you, teachers and parents, for your help in preparing our children!



FRIDAY EVENINGS OF LENT

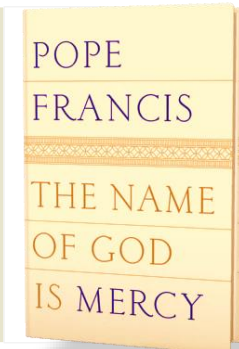
Experience a transformation of the heart this Lent.

6pm: Adoration & Reconciliation

7pm: Stations of the Cross

7:30pm Talk/Group discussion based on Pope Francis' book *The Name of God is Mercy*. Reading the book is encouraged but not essential.

This coming Friday our guest speaker and discussion leader is once again Dr. Peter Meehan, president of Corpus Christi College. See you Friday!



THE NAME OF GOD IS MERCY: EXCERPTS

Extracts made available by the publisher, Piemme.

Telling the story of his episcopal motto, Pope Francis returns to an experience of God's mercy, which took place in his teenage years.

"I don't have any particular memories of mercy as a young child. But I do as a young man. I think of Father Carlos Duarte Ibarra, the confessor I met in my parish church on September 21, 1953, the day the Church celebrated Saint Matthew, the apostle and evangelist. I was seventeen years old. On confessing myself to him, I felt welcomed by the mercy of God."

"Ibarra was originally from Corrientes but was in Buenos Aires to receive treatment for leukemia.

He died the following year. I still remember how when I got home, after his funeral and burial, I felt as though I had been abandoned. And I cried a lot that night, really a lot, and hid in my room." "Why? Because I had lost a person who helped me feel the mercy of God, that *miserando atque eligendo*, an expression I didn't know at the time but I eventually would choose as my episcopal motto. I learned about it later, in the homilies of the English monk, the Venerable Bede [672-735]. When describing the calling of Matthew, he writes: "Jesus saw the tax collector and by having mercy chose him as an apostle saying to him, 'follow me.'"

EXCERPTS from *The Name of God is Mercy* cont'd...

"The Church condemns sin because it has to relay the truth: 'this is a sin'. But at the same time, it embraces the sinner who recognises himself as such, it welcomes him, it speaks to him of the infinite mercy of God. Jesus forgave even those who crucified and scorned him."

"To follow the way of the Lord, the Church is called on to dispense its mercy over all those who recognise themselves as sinners, who assume responsibility for the evil they have committed, and who feel in need of forgiveness. The Church does not exist to condemn people, but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy."