

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend Gospel speaks again about God's incredible mercy. This woman, caught in the very act of committing adultery, is brought before Jesus. He reaches out in such compassion and love. One interpretation of this passage is that Jesus bends down to write on the ground so that He can catch her eye, which must have been looking down in shame. He wants her attention so that she can know that in His great love for her; He forgives *all*. At the end of the story, we hear Jesus say, "**Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more**" (John 8:11).

Jesus' greatest desire for us is NOT condemnation, but *mercy*. All He needs is our sorrow for sins, and us to ask for that forgiveness. And God always says, "I forgive you." The best way to ask for forgiveness is through the great Sacrament of Reconciliation (aka Confession, aka Penance). In this Sacrament, we hear God say, "I forgive you" ...and don't we need to hear it with our own ears!

Last weekend, I was reading Fr. Brian Kennedy's bulletin (St. Matthew, Windham), and he wrote a beautiful examination of conscience to help prepare for Confession. I share it with you now.

Do I want to die...

Rife with resentment?	Without asking for forgiveness?	Spurning prayer?
Without forgiving others?	Filled with obstinacy?	Hating my enemies?
Neglecting my faith?	Without ever saying "I'm sorry"?	Not needing anyone else?
Given over to defiance?	In love with arrogance?	Enslaved to egoism?
Imbued with bitterness?	Attached to worldly pleasures?	Oblivious to the poor?
Bloated with self-love?	Indignant and self-righteous?	Ungrateful and ungiving?
Dejected and defeated?	Smug and self-important?	Disheartened/disgruntled?
Tormented by regrets?	With disdain for purity?	With a spiteful spirit?
With indifference to God?	With unconverted desires?	Isolated and alienated?
Infatuated with self-satisfaction?	Surrounded by false idols?	Obsessed with avarice?
Cold and hard-hearted?	Cynical and skeptical?	Disappointed and hurt?
Dismissive of the power of grace?	Without ever saying "I love you?"	Deaf to God's Word?

If I don't want to die this way, then I need to repent and seek reconciliation with God and the family of God's Children, because both sin and forgiveness are community affairs.

During Lent, we have Confessions available on Saturday afternoon from 2:45-3:45pm, Sunday from 7:30-7:45am, 10:00-10:15am, and 5:30-5:45pm. Other Lenten opportunities are Wednesday, April 10 at 7:00pm, Monday, April 15 from 11:00am-1:00pm and 5:00-7:00pm, and Good Friday, April 19 from noon-2:45. You can also call Fr. Kelley or me for an appointment. There are other parishes in the area, and St. Joseph the Worker Shrine in Lowell has confessions every day (www.stjosephshrine.org/mass-and-confession-schedule). I encourage you to take advantage of this great Sacrament of Healing!