

POINTS OF INTEREST

Thank You. Father Elias thanks all those generous people who gave gifts in appreciation for his ministry.

Pancake Breakfast. Our monthly Pancake Breakfast will be held on April 26 in the church hall, following the Divine Liturgy.

Second Penance. Our First Communicants will celebrate their Second Penance on Sunday April 26 at 9.30 am, in preparation for their First Communion that will be celebrated on May 3rd.

First Communion. Join us on Sunday May 3rd at 10.00 AM as we celebrate the First Communion of three of our parish children: Rhea Frangieh, Leah Rafka Akiki & John Floyd Merrifield Jr..

Feast of the Ascension. On May 14, we celebrate the feast day of the Ascension. The **Only** Divine Liturgy on that day will be at **6.30 PM**

Lebanese Food Festival. Our food festival will take place on **June 13** at Hudson Shores Park in Watervliet. Free admission and parking. Please mark your calendar.

Bus Trip to Yankee Stadium on July 18th to attend the New York Yankees vs Seattle Mariners game. The cost is \$100 per person. Only **20 tickets** are still available. For more info, contact Mike Rezey 339-9468; Al Patnode 225-3335 or Richard Peters 272-2934.

Verse Of The Week

"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb."

(Cf. Psalm 139:13)

St. Catherine of Siena

Born: 25 March 1347

Died: 29 April 1380

Birthplace: Siena, Italy

The 24th child of a wool dyer in northern Italy, St. Catherine started having mystical experiences when she was only 6, seeing guardian angels as clearly as the people they protected. She became a Dominican tertiary when she was 16, and continued to have visions of Christ, Mary, and the saints.

St. Catherine was one of the most brilliant theological minds of her day, although she never had any formal education. She persuaded the Pope to go back to Rome from Avignon, in 1377, and when she died she was endeavoring to heal the Great Western Schism. In 1375 Our Lord gave her the Stigmata, which was visible only after her death. Her spiritual director was Blessed Raymond of Capua. St. Catherine's letters, and a treatise called "The Dialogue" are considered among the most brilliant writings in the history of the Catholic Church. She died when she was only 33, and her body was found incorrupt in 1430. Pope Paul VI named her a Doctor of the Church in 1970.

Saint's Quote

"It is better to be the child of God than king of the whole world."

St. Aloysius Gonzaga

Confession (Part 1 of 2)

For those of us who want to become saints, the Church tells us to “frequent the sacraments.”

What does this really mean, though? There are, after all, seven. Should we become regular “wedding crashers”?

No. “Frequent the sacraments” means regularly receiving Eucharist and confession—not just once a year around Easter as canon law requires.

But while lines for Communion are usually long, the same can’t be said for the confessional. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), only 12 percent of Catholics confess once a year and a mere 14 percent do so more than once a year. Forty-five percent never go at all, and another 30 percent say they go less than once per year. That means that in any given year, three quarters of the faithful are not frequenting reconciliation.

This is not just an American problem; it is a global Catholic one. For instance, according to Fr. Bonnie Mendes of Caritas Asia, “In Pakistan, in a few places I see priests sitting for confession and rarely a queue of penitents to confess their sins.”

Healed by Christ

Perhaps today’s Catholics don’t go because they think they only need to confess mortal sins. However, while this is *technically* true, the Church throughout history has urged us to confess even venial sins. Venerable Pius XII explained it this way:

“Venial sins may be expiated in many ways.... But to ensure more rapid progress...in the path of virtue, we will that the pious practice of frequent confession...should be earnestly advocated.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches:

“The regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ, and progress in the life of the Spirit” (CCC, 1458).

This echoes Venerable Pius, who also taught that confession in general increases self-knowledge, helps us grow in humility, corrects our bad habits, makes us more spiritually diligent and less lukewarm, purifies our conscience, strengthens our self-control, and—last but certainly not least—gives us graces, tons and tons of graces. In other words, it increases our faith, and what could be better in this, the Year of Faith?

Begin life again

Benedict XVI put it beautifully when he said in 2006, “[Confession] offers us the possibility to begin our life again, and this new beginning is realized in the joy of the Risen One and in the communion of forgiveness that it gives us.”

So, the Church’s Magisterium certainly encourages confession, and more than once-per-year at that. Still, 75 percent of us evidently aren’t convinced. What can be done to change this situation?

First, we need to understand confession’s enormous positive value, which praying to Jesus alone in our rooms can never replicate. Second, we as individuals need to take responsibility by ensuring that we make each confession a good one. The best way to do this, says Father Aftab James Paul, who serves in the Diocese of Lahore, Pakistan, is to “come well prepared and be ready for the counseling from the priest.”

The initial step here is to pray that God opens our hearts to know and be honest about the sins we need to confess. One way a respected layman I know starts this process is by reading the Catechism’s section on Penance, beginning with no. 1422.

Examination of conscience

It is also important to make a thorough examination of conscience (see resource section).

In case you aren’t familiar with the examination of conscience, it is basically an expanded list of the 10 commandments that allows us to measure our lives against them.

Now, if it was simply, “Have I violated the fifth commandment, ‘Thou shalt not murder?’” of course most of us would regularly answer, “No.” The same holds true, probably, with most of the commandments. The key, then, is to find a good examination that will help you dig deeper and bring out each commandment’s nuances.

... continued next week.

Source: *Catholicdigest.com* by Brian O’Neel

April 13, 2015



The Pope Tweets

“The Lord never tires of forgiving us. It is we who get tired of asking for pardon.”

@Pontifex / Apr 14, 2015