



# March 5, 2023

## Second Sunday Of Lent

### Financial Blessing for February 25th

Adult.....	2,365.00	Children.....	1.00
Plate.....	51.00	Flowers.....	25.00
Food Shelf.....	173.50	Syria & Turkey.....	727.00
		<b>Total.....</b>	<b>3,342.50</b>

*Thank you for remembering Holy Cross Church  
with your Stewardship throughout the year.*

### Financial Blessing for & February 25th & 26th

Adult.....	1,612.00	Plate.....	583.00
Youth.....	23.00	Elec. Transfers.....	425.00
Central MN Catholic.....	37.00	Food Shelf.....	225.00
Syria & Turkey.....	882.55		
		<b>Total.....</b>	<b>3,787.55</b>

*Thank you for remembering Sacred Heart Church  
with your Stewardship throughout the year.*

### Financial Blessing for February 25th & 26th

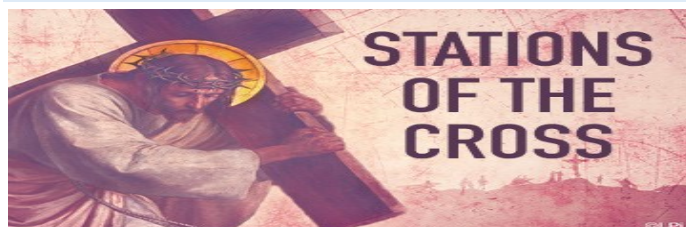
Adult.....	6,178.00	Plate.....	1,242.25
Children's Basket.....	172.00	Initial Offering.....	15.00
Votives.....	92.06	Easter Flowers.....	25.00
Lighthouse Media.....	12.00	Syria & Turkey.....	2,030.50
Elec. Transfers.....	4,035.00		
		<b>Total.....</b>	<b>13,801.81</b>

*Thank you for remembering St. Henry Church  
with your Stewardship throughout the year.*

### Financial Blessing for February 26th

Adult.....	1,145.00	Youth .....	14.00
Plate.....	328.06	Elec. Transfers.....	285.00
Central MN Catholic.....	68.00	Food Shelf.....	264.00
Syria & Turkey.....	749.00		
		<b>Total.....</b>	<b>2,853.06</b>

*Thank you for remembering St. Lawrence Church  
with your Stewardship throughout the year.*

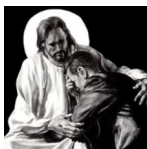


Sacred Heart: Wednesdays at 8:00PM  
Thursdays after the 8:30AM Mass  
St. Lawrence: Wednesdays at 6:30PM  
Fridays after the 8:30AM Mass  
Holy Cross: Wednesdays after the 5:15PM Mass  
St. Henry: Wednesdays at 6:30PM  
Fridays at 5:30PM  
Perham Living: Thursdays at 10:30AM

Sat, Mar 4, 4:00PM (Sacred Heart) † Art Riestenberg  
Sat, Mar 4, 5:00PM (St. Henry) † Roy Baldus  
Sat, Mar 4, 7:00PM (Holy Cross) † David Jaroszewski  
Sun, Mar 5, 8:00AM (St. Henry) † Phillip & Ramona Sauer  
Sun, Mar 5, 8:30AM (Sacred Heart) † Deland Porath  
Sun, Mar 5, 10:00AM (St. Henry) For the People  
Sun, Mar 5, 10:30AM (St. Lawrence) † Leon Westhoff  
Tue, Mar 7, 8:45AM (St. Henry) † Lawrence Dykhoff  
Tue, Mar 7, 7:00PM (Sacred Heart) † Josh Hanson  
Wed, Mar 8, 8:30AM (St. Lawrence) † Nick Hofland  
Wed, Mar 8, 5:15PM (Holy Cross) Christian Mothers  
Thu, Mar 9, 8:30AM (Sacred Heart) Healing of Rita Kuester  
Thu, Mar 9, 8:45AM (St. Henry) † Judy Kunza  
Fri, Mar 10, 8:30AM (St. Lawrence) † Mary Perius & † Jim Vetter  
Fri, Mar 10, 8:45AM (St. Henry) Tom & Karen Hammers' 48th Wedding Anniversary  
Fri, Mar 10, 10:00AM (Perham Living) † Jack & Odilia Riestenberg  
Sat, Mar 11, 4:00PM (Sacred Heart) † John Tschida  
Sat, Mar 11, 5:00PM (St. Henry) † Ed & Mary Sczygiel  
Sat, Mar 11, 7:00PM (Holy Cross) † Art Riestenberg  
Sun, Mar 12, 8:00AM (St. Henry) For the People  
Sun, Mar 12, 8:30AM (Sacred Heart) † Cullen Hansen  
Sun, Mar 12, 10:00AM (St. Henry) Deceased Szarke Family  
Sun, Mar 12, 10:30AM (St. Lawrence) † Beverly Schwartzfisher



There will be Confessions on Sunday,  
March 19th, at 2:00PM at St. Henry.



**Daylight Saving Time** begins next  
Sunday, March 12th. Remember to set  
your clocks ahead 1 hour.

**BULLETIN DEADLINE: Wednesday Noon**

# ST. LAWRENCE UPCOMING EVENTS

ST. LAWRENCE

faith  
Formation

**St. Lawrence Café**  
**Open Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
Bring a dish to share and join us for  
breakfast after the 8:30AM Mass.



## **"Be Still and Know that I am God"** **Women's Lenten Retreat** **March 18, 2023**

Mark Saturday, March 18, 2023, on your calendars to attend the St. Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women's Lenten Retreat to be held at St. Paul's Parish in St. Cloud. Registration is \$20. Contact Lora Knafla at (320) 393-2701 to register or mail check payable to St. Cloud DCCW to Lora at 11719 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, Rice, MN 56367 by March 10.

Speaker, Dana Webskowsky, was a lukewarm "cradle Catholic" who found church boring and contemplated leaving the church but is now in love with God, the Catholic faith and the Eucharist. Her mission is to help fallen away Catholics come back to His church, light a fire for the lukewarm Catholics out there, and help other Christians to see that the Catholic church has absolute truth and everything they need to grow in holiness. Dana grew up on a farm near Millerville, MN and now resides in Sioux Falls, SD.

### **Weekly Bulletin Email List**

If you would like to have the bulletin emailed to you each week, please let us know by giving us a call or by email.

### **Spring Mission Rally**

All are welcome to join us for the Spring Mission Rally: **'Walking Together in Christ's Love'** that will take place on Tuesday, April 25th from 8:00AM-1:00PM at Sacred Heart Church in Staples. Cost is \$10.00 per person. Please RSVP with payment by Thursday, April 13th. Registration begins at 7:00AM. Mass with Bishop Patrick Neary, CSC will begin at 8:30AM. Contact the Mission Office at 320-251-1100 to register.

**Text App to 88202**  
to download our parish app!  
Search for "Northern Cross Area  
Catholic Community"



**Wed., Mar. 8:** Change of Schedule: There will be class for all grades this Wednesday, March 8th (6:30-7:30PM) due to the all the time lost because of winter weather closings.

**Wed., Mar. 15:** All grades; 6:30-7:30PM; Stations of the Cross.

**Wed., Mar. 22:** All grades; 6:30-7:30PM; Stations of the Cross.

### **PAVING THE WAY AT ST. LAWRENCE**

Although the weather doesn't agree, we are a people of faith and hope, and we know that Spring is right around the corner! To celebrate, we are planning a new improvement project. The East parking lot is in rough shape and needs some renovation. The St. Lawrence Finance council and the Bishop's office have approved a construction project to blacktop the parking lot. This will be completed as soon as weather permits. The cost of this plan will be about \$27,000.

Just think, no more wiping the mud from your shoes as you enter the church. No more trying to walk around the puddles or uneven ground in any season. I hope that you will support this project with a donation to offset the expense.

Together, we will continue to preserve our historic church and grounds, as we pave the way for future generations of St. Lawrence families. May God bless you always.

Fr. George



**Bishop's Annual Appeal:** This is Commitment Week-end for the Bishop's Annual Appeal! Through your generosity, diocesan programs continue to build the Kingdom of God here in Central Minnesota thanks to the dedicated service of our pastors, parish and diocesan staff, and volunteers who continue to do the work of Christ. Please keep them thriving by making a gift with your offering today in your parish collection or at [www.stcladio.org/annualappeal](http://www.stcladio.org/annualappeal).

**Canonical Administrator:**  
**Parochial Vicar:**  
**Deacons:**

**Fr. George Michael, E-mail: [gmichaelvc@gmail.com](mailto:gmichaelvc@gmail.com), [fathergeorge@ncacc.net](mailto:fathergeorge@ncacc.net)**  
**Fr. Thomas Skaja, E-mail: [fathertom@ncacc.net](mailto:fathertom@ncacc.net) 218-298-0585**  
**Deacon Richard Quistorff; Deacon Randy Altstadt**



**St. Lawrence Catholic Church of Rush Lake**  
**46404 County Highway 14**  
**Perham, MN 56573**

**Phone: (218) 346-7729 Fax: (218) 346-5946 Em: (218) 758-2888**

**Email: [stlawrence@arvig.net](mailto:stlawrence@arvig.net)**

**Parish Website: [sacredheartstlawrencecatholicchurches.com](http://sacredheartstlawrencecatholicchurches.com)**





# SACRED HEART FAITH Formation

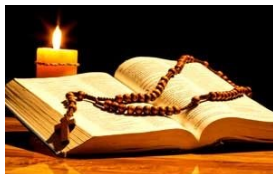
**Wed. Mar. 8:** Grades 1-11 classes; 7:00PM; Stations of the Cross at 8:00PM.

**Wed., Mar. 15:** Grades Pre/K -11 classes; 7:00PM; Stations of the Cross at 8:00PM.

**Wed., Mar. 22:** Grades Pre/K-11 classes; 7:00PM; Stations of the Cross at 8:00PM.

**Wed., Mar. 22: Grade 11 & Parents; Confirmation Learning Centers at 7:00PM.**

You are invited to join the Sacred Heart Christian Mothers for a **Lenten Scriptural Rosary** on Saturday, March 11th (3:15PM) or Sunday, March 12th (7:45AM) at Sacred Heart Church in Dent before the weekend Masses.



## SACRED HEART UPCOMING EVENTS

### Quilts of Valor Fundraiser


Saturday, March 18th

Dent Community Center

11:00AM-2:00PM

Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner plus baskets raffle. Free will offering for dinner (recommended \$10)



 **Healing Hearts Ministry** is a Christ centered, caring walk with any individual who is going through a difficult time. If you or anyone you know going through a difficult time and would like to visit, please contact Judy Christopherson, 218-298-0797, or Mary Schumacher, 218-298-1569.



**DOROTHY DAY**  
— OF FARGO-MOORHEAD —

**Dorothy Day House:** Help the homeless in our area by supporting the Dorothy Day House men's shelter in Moorhead, MN.

They are currently in need of the following items: Ziploc bags (gallon and sandwich); bath towels, winter hats, gloves and scarves; deodorant, men's underwear, plain white t-shirts, socks (these clothing items preferred to be new); disposable razors; sleeping bags; blankets and hygiene products. **They are especially in need of warm weather gear (hats, gloves and mittens).** For more information, see the website at [www.churches.united.org](http://www.churches.united.org) or call Teresa Elkin 218-298-1274 or Cecile Guck 218-298-4386. This will be an on-going effort.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:** Contact the Parish Offices

**SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY:** Diocesan Policy requires that the Pastor be contacted at least 6 months before the anticipated date of marriage to allow time for premarital inventory, instructions and planning.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:** ½ Hour before Weekend Masses at Sacred Heart, St. Lawrence and Holy Cross; First Friday from 9:00AM-10:00AM at St. Lawrence; Second Thursday from 9:00AM-10:00AM at Sacred Heart; Third Saturday from 6:00PM- 7:00PM at Holy Cross. Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 8:15AM-8:45AM; Wednesday, 9:00AM-10:00AM; Saturday, 4:00PM—4:45PM (Before 5:00PM Mass) at St. Henry

**Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick: Contact the Parish Offices**

**Trustees:** Brenda Aschnewitz & Jan Januszewski (Sacred Heart); Jack Werner & Andy Klinnert (St. Lawrence); Mark Halbakken & Lisa Hemmelgarn (St. Henry); Michele Hofland & Clint Brandt (Holy Cross)

**Northern Cross Area Catholic Community Pastoral Council Members:** Dawn Swanz, Michele Hofland, Jason Schik (Holy Cross); Brenda Aschnewitz, John Kratzke, Kenny Moenkendick (Sacred Heart) Tim Graff, Lisa Hemmelgarn, Jason Smith (St. Henry); Sandi Carrlson, Jack Werner, Jerry Guck (St. Lawrence)



**Sacred Heart Catholic Church of Dent**

36963 State Highway 108

Dent, MN 56528

Phone: (218) 758-2700 Em: (218) 758-2888

Email: [sacredheart@arvig.net](mailto:sacredheart@arvig.net)

**Parish Website:** [sacredheartstlawrencecatholicchurches.com](http://sacredheartstlawrencecatholicchurches.com)





Congratulations to our Calendar Raffle winners this week. 3-1-23-Ron Loerzel-\$50 and 3-3-23-Roger and Bonnie Sweere-\$100

# ST. HENRY



## Fun Fair 2023

We need cakes for the cake walk. We are asking all parishioners in the NCACC to help us with baking cakes for the cake walk. Cakes can be brought to the table outside of the gym on Saturday, March 11 or to the table inside the gym on Sunday, March 12 by 11:00am. Your help is much appreciated.

We will be having a live Fun Fair at the school on Sunday, March 12 from 11:00AM-3:30PM.

Here are some of the class baskets on the auctions this year. Pre-K-BBQ Basket, 1<sup>st</sup>-MN Fun Basket, 3<sup>rd</sup>-Kitchen Basket, 4<sup>th</sup>-Man's Basket, 5<sup>th</sup>-Camping Basket, 6<sup>th</sup>-Movie Night Basket

**Jason Smith, Principal**  
218-346-6190 or sthenryschool@arvig.net

**Community Outreach Ministry** provides free furniture and household items to families in our area. We store items in the old St Stans rectory and in the garage at the present time. We are in immediate need of twin, full and queen beds in great condition, smaller dressers, love seats or smaller couches, smaller kitchen tables and chairs. If you have these items, please call Teresa Elkin at 218-298-1274 or Cindy Olson at 218-849-8658.

**Save the Date:** Fr. Kenneth Popp will be celebrating his Retirement and 40th Anniversary on Sunday, June 4th with a 10:30AM Mass at St. Joseph's Church, Pierz, MN, with a lunch to follow. Fr. Popp invites anyone that would wish to celebrate with him to come.



If anyone is interested in singing for the Holy Week services, please talk to Gina or call the parish office.

The next Court St. Rita #409 Catholic Daughters meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 7th**, at 7:00PM at St. Henry's Church basement. All women are welcome!



*"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."*  
*Matthew 17:5*



**Wed, Mar 8th:** Class (Grades 7-11) 6:30PM-7:30PM  
**Wed, Mar 15th:** Class (Grades 7-11) 6:30PM-7:30PM  
**Wed, Mar 22nd:** Class/Confessions (Grades 7-11) 6:30PM-7:30PM

Free meal served every Wednesday there is class from 5:30PM-6:15PM. We are still in need of volunteers for the pre-class meal, please see the sign-up sheet in the narthex or contact Caleb if interested in taking one or multiple dates.

**Caleb Carrlson, Faith Formation Director**  
218-457-0987 or religioused@st-henrys.org

The youth choir will sing on March 12th at the 10:00 am Mass. Any youth interested should attend the next rehearsal on March 8th after Faith Formation.



We are looking for musicians to join our **Confirmation Choir** on Sunday, April 16th at 2:00PM. We would love to have musicians from all four parishes. If you would like to join the choir, please talk to either Sandi or Ann in the parish offices.



**Friday, February 24th**

**Friday, March 3rd**

Meal prepared by Holy Cross Parishioners

**Friday, March 24th**

**Friday, March 31st**

Meal prepared by St. Henry Parishioners

*5:00 pm-7:00 pm*

*St. Henry's School Gym*

\$15-Adult

\$7-Children 6-12

Free-Children 5 & Under

## MENU:

FISH, BAKED POTATO, VEGETABLE, COLESLAW, DINNER ROLLS,

BARS & BEVERAGES

*Take-out is available!*

**Everyone welcome!**

**St. Henry's Catholic Church of Perham**  
234 2nd Ave SW  
Perham, MN 56573  
Phone: (218) 346-4240 Em: (218) 758-2888  
Email: admin@st-henrys.org  
**Parish Website:** www.parishfaith.com



## HOLY CROSS UPCOMING EVENTS

Stations of the Cross will follow Wednesday night Mass.

Rice Bowl collection will be a jar in the entry marked "Rice Bowl".



Lilies for Easter can once again be ordered in memory or in honor of someone. Forms will be on the table in the entry.

Raffle tickets for St. Henry's Fun fair are in your mailboxes; return sold tickets to the collection and if you need more tickets contact Faye.

Cards will be played every Thursday at 1:00 pm. 



### Pope Francis' Prayer to Saint Joseph

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
To you God entrusted his only Son;  
in you Mary placed her trust;  
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
show yourself a father  
and guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,  
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

(Composed by Pope Francis in *Patris Corde*.)

**OFFICE HOURS: (HOLY CROSS): Call Faye Hendrickx:**

(218) 385-3850

**(SACRED HEART): Monday, Thursday & Friday: From 9:00**

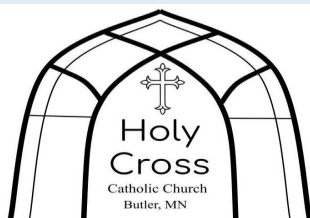
**AM-12 Noon, (218) 758-2700**

**(ST. LAWRENCE): Tuesday & Wednesday: From 9:00 AM-**

**12 Noon, (218) 346-7729**

**(ST. HENRY): Monday-Friday: From 8:30 AM—4:30PM,**

**(218) 346-4240**



### Please pray for those in need of healing in our parishes:

Adam Stewart, Dean Salo, Elaine Pietsch, Heath Kinnunen, Jean Schmitz, Jesse Erickson, Jim Guck, Joe Berns, Joe Sczygiel, Jon Pauna, Kacie (Pikula) Derkacht, Karen Omberg, Larry Bucholz, Larry Imdieke, Lucille Schik, Marion Jaroszewski, Mary Ann Guck, Mike Ruther, Paul Juen, Richard Bergeron, Robert Daiker, Ron Wallace, Ruth Moericke, Steve & Sue Loerzel

**All military personnel, especially:** Martin Ara, Greg Hirschey, Sandra Silbernagel, Nicholas Melz, Luke Potts, Zoe McAvoy, Jason Richter, Miguel Martinez, Tanya Robison, Tommy Robison, Steven Sundberg, Tyler Van Watermulen, Andrew Schlosser, Ed Guck

*Always remember in prayer our leaders in faith, especially: Pope Francis, Bishop Patrick Neary, Bishop Emeritus Donald Kettler, Dcn Randy Altstadt, Dcn Richard Quistorff, Fr. George Michael and Fr. Tom Skaja.*

### New School Capital Campaign Update

<b>Complete Project</b>	\$8,100,000.00
<b>Pledged</b>	\$8,202,452.00
<b>Pledges to be Received</b>	\$614,760.00
<b>Received</b>	\$7,587,692.00
<b>Pledged Monies Received 02-27</b>	\$4,197.00
<b>Households Contributing</b>	350

**We are looking for people to commit to spending a scheduled hour a week with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament at Adoration at St. Henry. The hours we could really use a guardian are:**

Tuesday from 7-8pm

Wednesday from 6-7am

Wednesday from 1-2pm

Thursday from 2-3pm

Please prayerfully consider giving Jesus an hour of your week in Adoration. If you would be interested in taking a time slot, please call the parish office at 218-346-4240.

### Holy Father's Prayer Intention for March

We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

### Readings for the Week

<b>Monday</b>	Lv 19:1-2, 11-18	Mt 25:31-46
<b>Tuesday</b>	Is 55:10-11	Mt 6:7-15
<b>Wednesday</b>	Jon 3:1-10	Lk 11:29-32
<b>Thursday</b>	Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25	Mt 7:7-12
<b>Friday</b>	Ez 18:21-28	Mt 5:20-26
<b>Saturday</b>	Dt 26:16-19	Mt 5:43-48
<b>Sunday</b>	Gn 12:1-4a	2 Tm 1:8b-10
	Mt 17:1-9	

### Holy Cross Catholic Church of Butler

57189 Co. Hwy 62 New York Mills, MN

Phone (218) 385-2201 or (218) 385-3850 Em: (218) 758-2888

Email: fayeaddell@yahoo.com

Parish Website: <https://www.parishfaith.com/holy-cross---butler>

Please let the advertisers know you saw their ad in the bulletin.

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 <p>218.346.2197 906 2ND AVE NE   PERHAM, MN 56573 (7 Blocks North of Main on 1st Ave. N.) LAKESCOUNTRYLANDSCAPING.COM</p>	 <p>Marie Hanson 725 9th St NW Perham, MN 56573 218-298-0598 Bring this in for a free training session fitnessfirst@mail.com</p>	 <p>5:30 am - 3 pm (Mon-Sat) 8 am - 2 pm (Sun) 136 W. Main St Perham (218) 346-5920</p>	 <p>Preschool to 6th Grade 218-346-6190</p>
<p>CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS COURT ST. RITA PERHAM, MN</p> <p>Serving the community for 102 years</p> <p>To JOIN, CONTACT REGENT LEANNE STOLL AT 218-758-3050</p> 	 <p>www.hci-mn.com 218-346-2195</p>	 <p>Water Treatments Reverse Osmosis Bottled Water Softener Salt Quality &amp; Service at an affordable price! www.BenHolzerUnlimited.com Call Adam or Char at 218-346-6445</p>	 <p>255 3rd Ave SE Perham, MN 56573 218-346-6250 www.overlandinsurance.com</p>
 <p>Open 24 hours a day 7 days a week Keystone Inc. 211 Market Drive Perham, MN 56573 Phone: 218-346-6750 Fax: 218-346-6752 thefreshplace.com</p>	<p><b>HAMMERS</b> RENTAL PROPERTIES Perham, MN 218-346-6770</p>	 <p>218-346-6200 Over 41 years of Service</p>	<p>★ ★ ★ ★ ★</p> <p><b>FIVE STAR STORAGE</b> East Industrial Park, Perham Secure Location, Rodent Deterrent Call for your inside or secure</p>
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 <p>218-346-4688 Cell: 218-298-1477</p>	 <p>From our family to yours.</p>	<p>ALL CREATURES VETERINARY HOSPITAL 905 Jenny Ave Perham, MN 56573 218-346-PETS (7387)</p> <p>ALL CREATURES BOARDING &amp; GROOMING 44033 Hawes Beach Road Ottertail, MN 56571 218-367-PETS (7387)</p> <p>Dr. Raeanne Tisdell-Covington, DVM Dr. Darl Enga, DVM Dr. Lani Vincent, DVM allcreaturesperham.com</p>	<p><b>ROHDE INSURANCE SERVICES</b> Writing all lines of insurance.</p>  <p>218-739-3295 Mickey Rohde, Dianne Rohde-Szarke &amp; staff</p>

### Stewardship as a Way of Life:

*"Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you." — Genesis 12:1*



God calls all of us to leave behind our old ways and to follow Him, placing our complete trust in Him. Some of the old ways that we struggle to leave behind might be materialism, selfishness and greed. Yet, God promises to show us a new land and a better way to live. Remember what St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "God does not call us to be successful. God calls us to be faithful."



*"God doesn't call you to be successful, He calls you to be faithful."*

*- Blessed Mother Teresa*



Hey everyone,

If you've gone to confession within the last week and a half, you've probably noticed a couple changes in the prayer of absolution. Back in 2021, the United States bishops approved a new translation for the prayer, and it was officially approved by the Holy See in April of 2022. As of Ash Wednesday 2023, the new version can now be prayed by the priest in confession. While the essential words of the formula of absolution have *not* been changed, the Holy See has confirmed two minor modifications to the first part of the prayer:

1974 Version	2023 Version
<p>God, the Father of mercies,          through the Death and Resurrection of his Son          has reconciled the world to himself          and <u>sent the Holy Spirit among us</u>          for the forgiveness of sins;          through the ministry of the Church          may God <u>give</u> you pardon and peace.          AND I ABSOLVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS,          IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE          SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (R. Amen.)</p>	<p>God, the Father of mercies,          through the Death and Resurrection of his Son          has reconciled the world to himself          and <u>poured out the Holy Spirit</u>          for the forgiveness of sins;          through the ministry of the Church          may God <u>grant</u> you pardon and peace.          AND I ABSOLVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS,          IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE          SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (R. Amen.)</p>

Personally, I'm a big fan of the changes, especially going from "sent" to "poured out." It's a beautiful reminder that God is not stingy with His grace and mercy, but that God the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us like an immense waterfall of mercy! When you receive absolution in the Sacrament of Confession, think of yourself as being at the bottom of Niagara Falls... this is the mercy that God gives us when we receive the gift of absolution. His mercy is absolutely unfathomable!

I could probably end it here, but since I have some more space in this letter, I thought it might be fun to offer some answers to frequently asked questions about the Sacrament of Reconciliation. So here we go:

1. How often should I go to confession?

The Church asks us to confess our sins "at least once a year."<sup>1</sup> It's one of the five precepts of the Church, and it's something the Church asks of us because she knows we need it. With that said, "at least once a year" is the bare minimum. Personally, I'd recommend going more often, even once a month. Frequent reception of this sacrament will change your life.

2. Confession is so embarrassing. How do I overcome my anxiety and fear?

In the words of a brother priest, feeling ashamed of one's sins "is already the first healthy sign of a conscience that has not grown numb or blind to evil." Pray for the grace to be brave, and don't allow this shame to keep you from the sacrament of mercy. Also, I want to remind you that there

<sup>1</sup> CCC 2042

is no obligation to go to confession face-to-face. The screen is always an option, and no priest will ever look down on you for it.

3. Do you recognize people even if they confess behind the screen?

The screen definitely helps with anonymity, but I'll be honest, there are times when a person's voice is recognizable. But that reminds me of a story. Someone once asked a priest if he looked differently at someone after he heard their confession. He said, "Yes. I look at them with so much more respect that they would be willing to sacrifice their reputation for their relationship with God." As a priest, I'm just so happy that you're there.

4. What's it like to hear confessions as a priest?

Hearing confessions is one of my favorite parts of the priesthood. Fr. Mike Schmitz said it well, "I see the costly mercy of God in action. I get to regularly come face-to-face with the overwhelming, life-transforming, power of God's love. I get to see God's love up close." Everytime I get to hear confessions, I get to see the miracle of God's mercy.

5. I had a bad experience the last time I went. What if I don't feel comfortable going back?

First of all, I'm sorry to hear you had a bad experience. Sometimes priests can be distracted, tired, unprepared, and even straight-up impatient. While the Church asks us to go to confession, there's no obligation to go to the same priest each time. Don't let a bad experience keep you from the confessional... Jesus is waiting for you there.

6. What if I forget to confess a sin from my past?

If you do your best to confess all of your sins, and if you do not intentionally withhold anything, you are absolved of ALL YOUR SINS when you receive absolution, including anything you might have forgotten. Be at peace.

7. What if I don't remember how to go to confession?

Just ask the priest... he will help you out.

Please know of my prayers for you during this Lenten season. It is my prayer that you make confession a regular part of your spiritual life. If you ever have any questions or want to chat further, I'm always available.

Peace,

Fr. Tom