

FINDING PEACE THROUGH FORGIVENESS BY CHRIST

On the morning of January 28, 2010 I opened the February issue of Colombia Magazine, a publication of the Knights of Columbus. I was struck by a story listed in the table of contents entitled, Confession's Comeback.

The opening line of the article was a quote by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of San Antonio, which read; "Reconciliation is essential for the future of humanity". Realizing the truth and power of the statement I continued reading. As I read through the article I could identify a sense of hope developing within myself regarding the use of the sacrament and that many more souls have encountered Christ in this unique opportunity over the last few years. When I finished the article I still knew that not enough souls have embraced or experienced the true joy and peace, the transforming power that this unusual gift, this magnificent opportunity, this encounter with Christ can bring into one's life.

We are presently in the season of lent, a season of spiritual refocus, during which we as Catholics should be critically analyzing our own relationship with Christ and doing our best to strengthen that relationship and make it better. Opening one's heart and soul to Christ as they kneel or sit with Christ, in the person of the priest, in the sacrament of reconciliation, is and continues to be one of the most powerful human experiences and the best way of starting that spiritual renewal. When we look more deeply into what His forgiveness includes we see His unconditional love, His transforming Grace, His sustaining strength, or in other words, the real and true opportunity to work anew with Christ in our lives at attaining the one thing each of us was created and redeemed for, living for and obtaining the peace of everlasting life.

The article mentioned above offers statistics from a 2008 survey taken by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University stating that, "only 61% of Catholics who attend Mass weekly go to confession once a year or more".

This needs to change! It needs to change because if we fall into that 61% who encounter Christ through this magnificent sacrament only once a year or so,

than we are really not making any spiritual progress in becoming one with Him. It also effects how we receive our Lord in Holy Communion. Are we receiving the fullness of Grace offered to us by Christ when we receive His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, which will bring into the open and ready soul, the peace, joy and tranquility which nothing in this world can give us? Not if our heart is cold and hard or the doors to our souls are rusted closed or glued shut!

Each of us must work at allowing Christ to work within us as often as possible through this magnificent sacrament! Our spiritual life should always include consistent use of the sacrament of reconciliation because it is through proper preparation for this sacrament, examining our conscience, that we gain the knowledge about our selves which shows us our great need for Christ.

If you find that your life has stress in it, if you find yourself lacking patience for dealing with those in your daily life, if you find it hard to forgive others, if your struggling with being lazy or selfish, wanting more peace, more joy or to understand better what your true purpose is in this life, start with encountering Christ through this very beautiful sacrament. Once you have experienced the joy and love of His forgiveness, be sure to return often and bring someone with you the next time you go!