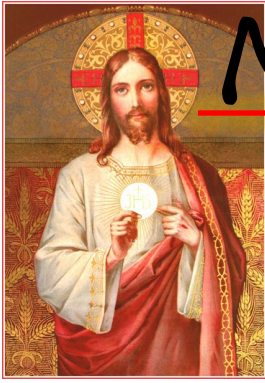




# **Cathedral**

**OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

# **SACRAMENTO**



# Mystagogy

## On Approaching the Glory of God in the Holy Eucharist (Part II)

Last week we looked at the immense power of God's Holiness and how even the godliest prophets, priests, saints, and Apostles were staggered and laid low when they were allowed to glimpse the unfiltered Presence of God. As we have seen, the holiness of the divine nature is made present to us in the Holy Eucharist, though it is—for our sake—masked by the appearance of bread and wine whose substance has been utterly transubstantiated into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. This is not a reality of substance that can be discerned by our senses, but sacred truth that must be apprehended by the grace of infused faith. Only after that grace has awakened faith and worked a miracle of enlightenment in our spirit can our intellect then be employed to bring us some theological understanding of the extraordinary gift that is given to us in the Eucharist.

Christ came, lived among us, died upon the Cross, rose again from the dead, and then ascended into Heaven, leaving us the promise of His return at some point in the future; however, in leaving this earth, He did not leave us utterly without His Presence: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" was His promise (Matthew 28:20). The Old Testament prophets spoke of the coming of the Messiah, they spoke of His death and resurrection, but never did they speak of His coming, leaving, and then returning to the earth a second time. This is so because when He ascended into Heaven He did not entirely leave this earth, but remains here in the Holy Eucharist. Through the Church He continues to preach the Gospel, intercede on behalf of the entire human race, and dispense His grace through the sacraments. His arrival in the first century, His ascension into Heaven, and His return to the earth at some point in the future are but the first and final movements of His coming, and they are presently linked across the centuries by the holy sacrifice of the mass that gives us the Eucharist.

The Apostle John wrote in the first general epistle called by his name, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit, which confesses that Jesus Christ *has come* in the flesh is of God . . ." (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:). In the original Greek, the Apostle uses the perfect tense, which indicates a historical event that stands completed in the present. The emphasis is laid on the present tense and completed character of this historical event; it may have happened in the past, but it is a current reality. Christ came in the past, He will come again in the future, but He is currently present on this earth in the Eucharistic community of faith. Understanding this reality, the Apostle John writes in the book of Revelation that Jesus is the beginning and the end, "the Almighty", the one who is, who was, and who is to come (Revelation 1:8). Jesus came to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, it remains present in the hearts of His faithful children who make up the Church, and it will be fully consummated at His Second Coming.

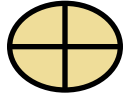
So much of our understanding of the Catholic faith depends upon the revelation of the Eucharistic presence of Christ upon our altars and reserved in our tabernacles. In the Holy Eucharist we "have tasted of the heavenly gift" (Hebrews 6:4), felt the power of the age to come, and have encountered the fullness of the eternal Christ made present in the world. For that reason, we rightly proclaim with the Apostle John, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; that . . . declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1, 3).

Next week, in the final segment of this series on the Eucharist, we shall look at the meaning, practice, and benefits of Eucharistic adoration.

~John-David Black~

## Communion Hosts

By Dirk Van Susteren



A century ago, before mass transportation and ordering over the Internet, altar bread was made locally, usually by the nuns of the parish or sometimes the laywomen from the church altar society. Making hosts this way was a time-honored tradition, but the tradition began breaking down in the years after World War II, as many convents and monasteries found they couldn't keep up with the demand. While 60 years ago there were hundreds of Communion host makers in the country, today just a handful remain.

The nation's biggest producer is the Cavanagh Company of Smithfield, Rhode Island. Located in the rural north-western part of the Ocean State in the area of pick-your-own apple orchards, the company, with 35 employees who work round-the-clock shifts, pumps out 25 million hosts a week. The family-run business estimates it serves 80 percent of the U.S. and Canadian market. It sells its hosts to religious supply centers, convents, and monasteries, which in turn resell them to local parishes for profit.

Some monasteries that buy Cavanagh altar bread also make their own. The Passionist Nuns in Ellsville, Missouri, make their bread once or twice a week with only a two-Sister work team. "We're talking small operation here," says Sister Veronica.

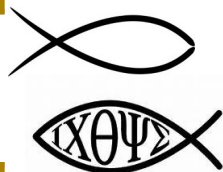
As do all the Sisters who make altar bread, the Passionists consider their work a form of devotion. Sister Veronica says she experiences joy and enthusiasm when she realizes "that when someone consumes each Host, he will be blessed by taking Jesus into himself." She says when she cuts the altar bread by hand, she sometimes wonders who might receive a particular host, and then says a prayer for that person.

Whether made in Missouri or Rhode Island, altar bread must be produced in accordance with Church specifications: it must be made only from wheat, must be recently baked, and, according to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, must be unleavened.

Some parishes make their own Communion hosts, an endeavor that harks back to the days when altar bread was made locally by the Sisters and women of a parish. For the past 15 years, a group of women (and now one man) at St. Timothy Church in Norwood, Massachusetts, have been baking hosts in their home kitchens, says Colleen Campion, the church's director of liturgy.

"This is a wonderful ministry," she adds, saying the baking is a welcome option for a church volunteer "who might not feel comfortable in front of people but who does feel comfortable in a kitchen."

## Christian Symbols



The Ichthys / Fish was chosen as an early secret symbol indicating that the person who knew the meaning of the Ichthys was a Christian and safe to associate with. Being a Christian was extremely dangerous for hundreds of years following the life of Jesus due to the persecutions of the pagan Roman Emperors. A Christian could draw a single arc that another Christian could complete by drawing another arc over it. Modern Christians still use the symbol but often include the Greek letters for the Ichthys acronym *I Ch Th U S*, which means "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior".

# 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time



All of us know people of good character, people who have a reputation of being decent, respectful of others, law-abiders who lead good lives, or so they appear. We also know of some who, even though they enjoy a good reputation, turn out to be a whole lot less than we thought, some of them going on to bring terrible

hurt to others and inflict real damage upon them. As the old saying goes, appearances are deceiving. Looking good does not mean that our hearts are filled with goodness.

The scribes and Pharisees had a certain kind of goodness, even holiness. Jesus did not condemn them for the goodness they sought, rather He condemned them for what they did not have in their hearts. They had no depth. They governed their thoughts and actions by their external observance of the Jewish laws and how they appeared in the eyes of others. The love of God and the love of others that flows from our love of God never filled their inner selves, never filled their hearts where they really lived. Sure, they did not murder others, but they allowed themselves to hate. Sure, they did not commit adultery, but they allowed themselves to regard women merely as objects for the pleasure of males. Wives were merely useful. That attitude adulterates genuine love and demeans women.

Jesus wants His Holy Spirit to dwell deep within us, in our hearts and souls. It's from there that our actions should begin. It's from there that our motives are formed, motives formed in generosity and in the unlimited love and care of God, for ourselves, and for others.

On one occasion in another context Jesus was talking with His disciples about this. He said to them: *"But what comes out of a person, that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."* (Mark 7: 20-23)

I am not suggesting that laws, rules, and regulations are of no value. They are very valuable. Many people observe laws because they fear the consequences of violating them. If a person thinks about committing a crime he may for a few moments think he can get away with it, but the thought of the punishment he will face if he breaks the law causes him to refrain. Breaking a contract has legal consequences even for those who, lacking self-respect, regard the giving one's word as of no consequence. Because many lack respect for God and likewise lack self-respect we as a society must have laws. Laws have a good purpose and serve us well.

Jesus, however, is looking for something far deeper than legal observances. He wants us to be motivated by love, to live loving lives, to care and to unselfishly give of ourselves to others and to our Father in heaven. This is a way of living that no law can motivate or impose on us. This way of living puts greater demands on us.

God gave us a tremendous gift, the gift of freely choosing. This is because love isn't truly love unless it is freely given – and freely received. After all, a gift isn't a gift unless and until it is received. God has paid us a tremendous compliment in that He respects our decisions. That is why He never forces our decisions. He offers and then He waits for our response. His love for us is unconditional. His only law is love, a love within us that governs our choices and the actions that flow from our choices.

This is not something new. It is found in God's Word given to us many centuries before Christ and is expressed in the first reading of today's Mass, a reading taken from the Old Testament's Book of Wisdom: *If you choose you can keep the commandments; it is loyalty to do his will. There are set before you fire and water; to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. Before man are life and death, whichever he chooses shall be given him. Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power, and all-seeing. The eyes of God see all he has made; he understands man's every deed.*

We all know full well what we do or don't do. And we all know what others do or don't do. God, however, is more interested in what He finds in our hearts. Do we simply obey rules, or do we choose to live in love and concern for others? That's a question the answer to which can only be found deep down in your heart – where you really live.

~Fr. Charles Irvin - Senior Priest, Diocese of Lansing~



February 12, 2017

**Week 6 in Ordinary Time**

Vol. 17 Issue 7

The Most Reverend **Jaime Soto**, Bishop of Sacramento

The Most Reverend **Myron Cotta**,  
Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento

The Very Reverend **Michael O'Reilly**, Rector

Reverend **Kieran M. McMahon**,  
Parochial Administrator Pro Tem

Reverend **Michael Estaris**, Priest in Residence  
Reverend **Brent Carlton Nail**, Priest in Residence  
Reverend **Nicholas Ho**, Chinese Mass

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Deacon Don DeHaven,

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Titi Kila, Wedding Coordinator  
tkila@cathedralsacramento.org

Tom Waddock, Cathedral Manager  
blessed@cathedralsacramento.org

## **Eucharistic Adoration**

Wednesday	12:45 to 4:45
Thursday	12:45 to 4:45
Friday	12:45 to 3:45

## **Sacrament of Confession**

Monday to Friday	11:30 am to 12:00 pm
Saturday	4:00 pm to 4:45 pm
Domingo En Español	12:30 pm a 12:45 pm y 6:30 pm a 7:00 pm

## **Gift Shop**

Sundays	9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Monday	10:30 am to 12:00 pm

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Sergio Ochoa Sanchez, Carmen Perez—Translators

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# Parish News



## BURNING OF PALMS

For the next two weeks, we will be collecting palms that you received last year and have dried out. As is our tradition and the tradition of the church, we will be burning these palms to create ashes for Ash Wednesday on February 26 at the 11am and 1pm Masses. Ash Wednesday is March 1 this year.

## RITE OF ELECTION

In the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), "Inquirers" enter the Catechumenate through the **Rite of Acceptance** held a minimum of four times a year in the Cathedral. As Catechumens, they receive formal instruction and formation in our faith. The **Rite of Election** brings to an end the period of the Catechumenate and inaugurates the Period of Purification. The Act of Election by Bishop Soto is a proclamation of admission to the reception of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), and is a significant turning point in the Catechumenate process. The rite celebrates the transition in the life of the catechumen from one who is seeking to one who is ready to stand firm in a commitment. The election is the announcement that the community has discerned that the catechumen is indeed ready to celebrate the Easter Sacraments.

The word "election" is not used as in a representative voting government like ours. **Sacramental "election" is focused on what God has done and is doing in these people's lives.** It is a public announcement that we, the Cathedral Parish, have seen God at work in them, and that they are ready to enter into the covenant relationship established through the sacraments. Since only a bishop may confer this election, each of the 106 parishes in the Sacramento Diocese sends its catechumens to the Cathedral during one of the four designated Rites of Election.

**THIS YEAR, THE RITE TAKES PLACE ON SATURDAY MARCH 4 AT 10:00AM AND 7:30PM, AND SUNDAY MARCH 5 AT 3:00PM AND 7:15PM**

## Next Weekend:



On the weekend of February 18 and 19, we will once again be given the opportunity to be Christ to others through works of mercy. How do we help a family in need? How do we best help the man or woman along the roadside with a request for money? Do we pass

them by? Do we feel guilty? Do we wonder how the money we give might be spent? As Catholics in the Diocese of Sacramento, we have a way to help those truly in need. By making a generous donation to the Annual Catholic Appeal, you can live the Gospel message and provide real assistance.



Our parish received 25% to serve our local needs, people who came to our doors looking for a bit of help or a hand up. The charitable works of the Church, whether in Catholic social service programs or parish-based outreach ministries, depend on all of us. Each of our gifts, no matter the amount, really does make a difference in someone's life. Please prayerfully consider what you can give. Our gifts to the Annual Catholic Appeal are Mercy in Motion.

**Thank you** Parents, Catechists, Students, and Friends for all your effort in making the Baby Bottle Fundraiser we held over Christmas 2016 such a great success! We raised money for the underprivileged children serviced by Missionary Childhood Association and Escuela Morelos in Chihuahua, Mexico. We were able to give each organization \$2,500. Congratulations!!



## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In Jesus is revealed a new wisdom, a new law, a new way of living. Happy are they who choose to keep his commandments and follow his ways.

Sir 15:15-20 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34 1 Cor 2:6-10 Mt 5:17-37



## Ordinary Time Readings

13

**Monday**

===

Abel's murder testifies to a regressive human history, forever reversed in Jesus, the sign of the Father.

Gn 4:1-15, 25  
Ps 50:1, 8, 16bc-17, 20-21  
Mk 8:11-13

14

**St. Cyril, Monk & St. Methodius, Bishop**

===

The flood waters destroy a decadent humanity. We are saved from death through Jesus, the bread of life.

Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10  
Ps 129:1a, 2, 3ac-4  
Mk 8:14-21

15

**Wednesday**

===

Noah offers a sacrifice of praise of God for his goodness. May we always see God's blessings in our lives.

Gn 8:6-13, 20-22  
Ps 166:12-15, 18-19  
Mk8:22-26

16

**Thursday**

===

The Lord looks kindly upon Noah and makes a covenant with him. Peter professes his faith in Jesus.

Gn 9:1-13  
Ps 102:16-18, 19-23, 29  
Mk8:27-33

17

**The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order**

===

If we wish to follow Christ, we must follow his way. Those who fear the Lord reject the ways of the proud.

Gn 11:1-9 Ps 33:10-15  
Mk 8:34-9:1

18

**Saturday**

===

The disciples seek to deepen their faith in Jesus, transfigured in glorious majesty.

Heb 11:1-7  
Ps 145:2-5, 10-11  
Mk 9:2-13

## Kevin Vaughn, organist

Friday, February 24, 2017 at 7:30 pm,  
at the Cathedral

Works by Bach, Buxtehude, Distler,  
Krebs, Litaize, and Vierne



Kevin J. Vaughn is director of music and organist at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in South Bend, instructor of organ at Goshen College, and adjunct assistant professor of piano and organ at the University of Notre Dame. An active recitalist, he has recently performed solo organ recitals in California, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Washington, as well as collaborative programs with baritone Stephen Lancaster in Illinois, Virginia, and Michigan. Kevin holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano, organ, and sacred music, including the first Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance conferred by the University of Notre Dame. He currently serves as dean of the St. Joseph Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and holds the Guild's Colleague certificate.

**\$10 donation at the door**

## The Men's Club meets this Tuesday

The Club unites men of the Cathedral Parish who are Christ-centered for the betterment of self, family, parish, and community. We openly discuss everyday issues, how we are affected by them, and how God wants us to act through prayer and reading the Bible. We meet this Tuesday, February 14, at 7:15 pm, in the Lower Level. Contact Bob Meyers at [cynm1@yahoo.com](mailto:cynm1@yahoo.com) for more information.

## Adult Confirmation Preparation Classes

Cathedral Parish Adult Confirmation Classes will begin on Thursday March 9, from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Lower Level for those who, for whatever reason, have never been confirmed. Bishop Jaime Soto extends this invitation each year providing that candidates have prior instruction. The Adult Confirmation Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Soto on June 3, 2017, the Vigil of Pentecost, at the 5:00 pm Mass. Please call Sister Jenny at 444-5364 to join this class.



## Immaculate Heart Radio Needs Your Help March 6th—10th

Volunteering a few hours of your time to assist us in answering the phone call during our Pledge Drive would be a blessing to us. Meet the announcer staff, enjoy food, fun and fellowship and even win some great books, movies and CD's. Contact Nicole at [volunteers@ihradio.org](mailto:volunteers@ihradio.org), or 888-887-7120

## Flu season is here.

If you are sick, or think you might be sick, or are concerned about contracting an illness, you should refrain from receiving the Blood of Christ. Be assured that "since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace." [Catechism, 1390]

## Rachel's Vineyard Healing Retreat

**February 17—19, 2017**

**"God will never forgive me for this..."**

Those who choose abortion are our daughters, sons, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, relatives, friends & members of our parish communities. The impact and pain of abortion hurts -even years after the experience. If you, or a loved one have been hurt by abortion, this weekend is for you! Come and experience God's healing love and forgiveness in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. Open to men and women. The cost is \$175 per person and financial assistance is available to anyone who needs it. Call Paula Segno or send an email for more information. (916) 733-0161 or [projectrachel@scd.org](mailto:projectrachel@scd.org). All inquiries are strictly confidential.

## Natural Family Planning Course

Have you ever thought about what unnatural birth control methods really do to your body? To your marriage? The Couple to Couple League has the answers and more. Attend a short course and learn a natural method of family planning that is safe, effective, and morally acceptable. Great for achieving as well as postponing pregnancy. A course starts **February 21st** at the Sacramento Life Center. Registration at [ccli.org](http://ccli.org), and for more information call or text Meghan 916-519-6802.

## 2017 Black History Month Mass

The Diocese of Sacramento Black Catholic Ministry invites you to come celebrate the contributions of the cultures with roots in Africa to our nation and Church, on **February 18, 5:00 pm**, at St. Rose of Lima Parish, 5961 Franklin Blvd, Sacramento 95824, with celebrant Bishop Myron Cotta and homilist Father Bartholomew Landry. Please RSVP by contacting [bcmvoice@outlook.com](mailto:bcmvoice@outlook.com) or 916-720-9025. All are welcome!

## Pro Life Retreat 2017

A one-day retreat for anyone involved in pro-life work of any kind will be offered by Fr. Avram Brown, on **February 25, 2017** at Trinity Pines Catholic Center in Colfax, CA. \$20 cost includes lunch. For more information and to register go to [www.ProLifeRetreat.com](http://www.ProLifeRetreat.com) or call Steve Patton at 916-733-0133.

## Registration for Confirmation Conference

On **March 4 & 5, 2017** at Christian Brothers High School, the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento will host a huge, dynamic, and exciting conference for all those youth preparing to receive the awesome Sacrament of Confirmation! "Fired Up" is intended for 7-12th graders who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2017. This is an excellent opportunity to connect your school/parish Confirmation program with the larger diocesan Catholic community, and it will include Bishop Jaime Soto and Bishop Myron Cotta! Registration is now open at [www.confirmationconference.com](http://www.confirmationconference.com).

## 2nd Annual 24 Hours for the Lord

Continuing Pope Francis' call during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Diocese of Sacramento invites all Catholics to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 24 Hours for the Lord to experience the Lord's loving mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, from noon on March 10, 2017, to noon on March 11, 2017. More details to come.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

You can help the Cathedral every time you shop on Amazon. Take a few minutes to sign up with "amazon smile" and .5% of your purchase will go to the Cathedral.



# CATHEDRAL KIDS

## St. Valentine's Day Word Search

F N K T T T G K I E  
 G O T K N R T M N L  
 L L R R I M U I G D  
 Y O U R A L T S F H  
 P R A Y S N T S T E  
 T B N G E R E I E V  
 R C O L U M W R V O  
 A D A E O L Q U O B  
 E V T C W B N S L A  
 H C T F R O M A L L

Trust in God with All Your Heart

True Love Comes from Above

Saint Valentine, Pray for Us.

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Make your loved ones a special valentine by gluing a Dove Chocolate Heart or a Hershey's Kiss to a card with a special message, like Proverbs 3:5. Or, try 1 John 4:8, John 15:12, Romans 10:12, 1 Corinthians 16:14, or 1 Peter 4:8. What other verses about love can you find in the bible?

### "Have you seen...?"

For great reviews and recommendations on new and older films appropriate for Catholic family viewing, check out [www.catholic.org/news/ae/movies](http://www.catholic.org/news/ae/movies). It includes trailers and video interviews to give you an in-depth understanding of a film before viewing. Some of the newer movies they cover are "Arrival," "Hacksaw Ridge," and "Silence."



## BIBLE QUIZ

1. From which part of Adam's body did God create Eve?
2. How did the father first respond upon seeing the Prodigal Son returning home?
3. How should we treat those who are our enemies, according to Jesus?

1. Rth (Gen 2:21)  
 2. He ran out and embraced him. (Luke 15:20)  
 3. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you. (Matt 5:44)

### Catholics are romantic.

We believe that two people can fall in love and stay in love. We believe that the biggest jerk can become the holiest person in our lives. We believe that the lowly are the ones who will be raised, the downtrodden the blessed, and the ones who are taken advantage of, justified. We believe that joy changes lives. That a piece of bread and a cup of wine transforms into the body and blood of Christ. And consuming that body and blood will transform us. We believe that we can step into a confessional a repentant sinner and walk out a forgiven son or daughter. We are romantic.

Fr. Ryan Mann

## My Side of the Confessional: What Is It Like for a Priest?

by Fr. Mike Schmitz

I was once riding in a shuttle-bus with a number of older folks on the way from an airport. They noticed that I was a priest and started asking questions about it.

"Do you do all of the priest stuff?"

"Yep."

"Even the Confession thing?"

"Yeah. All the time."

One older lady gasped, "Well, I think that that would be the *worst*. It would be so depressing; hearing all about people's sins."

I told them that it was the exact opposite. There is almost no greater place to be than with someone when they are coming back to God. I said, "It would be depressing if I had to watch someone leave God; I get to be with them when they come back to Him." The Confessional is a place where people let God's love win. The Confessional is the most joyful, humbling, and inspiring place in the world.

### What do I see during confession?

I think there are three things. First, 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 and it reminds me of how good God is.

Not many folks get to see the way in which God's sacrifice on the Cross is constantly breaking into people's lives and melting the hardest hearts. Jesus consoles those who are grieving their sins... and strengthens those who find themselves wanting to give up on God or on life. As a priest, I get to see this thing happen *every day*.

### I see a saint in the making.

The second thing I see is a person who is still trying – a saint in the making. **I don't care if this is the person's third Confession this week; if they are seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it means that they are trying. That's all that I care about.** This thought is worth considering: going to Confession is a sign that you haven't given up on Jesus.

This is one of the reasons why pride is so deadly. I have talked with people who tell me that they don't want to go to Confession to their priest because their priest really likes them and "thinks that they are a good kid."

I have two things to say to this.

He will not be disappointed! What your priest will see is a person who is trying! I dare you to find a saint who didn't need to God's mercy! (Even Mary needed God's mercy; she received the mercy of God in a dramatic and powerful way at her conception. Boom. Lawyered.)

So what if the priest is disappointed? We try to be so impressive with so much of our lives. Confession is a place where we don't get to be impressive. Confession is a place where the desire to impress goes to die. **Think about it: all other sins have the potential to cause us to race to the confessional, but pride is the one that causes us to hide from the God who could heal us.**

### Do I Remember Your Sins? No!

So often, people will ask if I remember people's sin from Confession. **As a priest, I rarely, if ever, remember sins from the confessional.** That might seem impossible, but the truth is, sins aren't all that impressive. They aren't like memorable sunsets or meteor showers or super-intriguing movies... they are more like the garbage.

And if sins are like garbage, then the priest is like God's garbage-man. If you ask a garbage-man about the gross-est thing he's ever had to haul to the dump, *maaaaaaybe* he could remember it. But the fact is, **once you get used to taking out the trash, it ceases to be noteworthy, it ceases to stand out.**

Honestly, once you realize that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is less about the sin and more about Christ's death and resurrection having victory in a person's life, the sins lose all of their luster, and Jesus' victory takes center stage.

**In Confession, we meet the life-transforming, costly love of God... freely given to us every time we ask for it. We meet Jesus who reminds us, "You are worth dying for... even in your sins, you are worth dying for."**

Whenever someone comes to Confession, I see a person who is deeply loved by God and who is telling God that they love Him back. That's it, and that's all.

### In Confession I see my own weakness.

The third thing a priest sees when he hears Confessions is his own soul. It is a scary place for a priest. I cannot tell you how humbled I am when someone approaches Jesus' mercy through *me*.

I am not over-awed by their sins; I am struck by the fact that they have been able to recognize sins in their life that I have been blind to in my own. Hearing someone's humility breaks down my own pride. It is one of the best examinations of conscience.

But why is Confession a scary place for a priest? It is frightening because of the way in which Jesus trusts me to be a living sign of His mercy.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen once told priests that we scarcely realize what is happening when we extend our hands over someone's head in absolution. **We don't realize, he said, that the very Blood of Christ is dripping from our fingers onto their heads, washing the penitent clean.**

The day after I was ordained, we had a little party and my dad stood up and made a toast. He has worked his entire life as an orthopedic surgeon, and he was a very good one. My whole life, his patients have come up to me at one time or another and told me how their lives have been changed because my dad was such a good surgeon.

So, there my dad was, standing in the midst of these people, and he began to say, "My whole life, I have used my hands to heal people's broken bodies. But from now on, my son Michael... um, *Father* Michael... will use his hands (at this point, he got choked up)... He will use his hands to heal broken souls. **His hands will save even more lives than mine have.'**

Confession is such a powerful place. All I have to do is offer God's mercy, love, and redemption... but I don't want to get in Jesus' way. **The priest stands in judgment of no one. In the Confessional, the only thing I have to offer is mercy.**

### I get to sacrifice for you.

Lastly, when a priest hears Confessions, he is taking on another responsibility.

One time, after college, I was returning to Confession after a long time and a lot of sin and the priest simply gave me something like "one Hail Mary" as my penance. I stopped.

"Um, Father...? Did you hear everything I said?"

"Yes, I did."

"Don't you think I should get a bigger penance than that?"

He looked at me with great love and said, "No. That small penance is all that I'm asking of you." He hesitated, and then continued, "But you should know... I will be fasting for you for the next 30 days."

I was stunned. I didn't know what to do. He told me that the Catechism teaches that the priest must do penance for all those who come to him for Confession. And here he was, embracing a severe penance for all of my severe sins.

This is why Confession reveals the priest's own soul; it reveals his willingness to sacrifice his life with Christ. He sees our sins as a burden that he will take up (with Jesus!) and offer them to the Father, while offering us the mercy of God.

Remember, **Confession is always a place of victory.** Whether you have confessed a particular sin for the first time, or if this is the 12,001st time, every Confession is a win for Jesus. And I, a priest, get to be there. That's what it's like... I get to sit and watch Jesus win His children back all day.

It's flippin' *awesome*.

# Lenten Reflection

For Lay Canossians and Friends



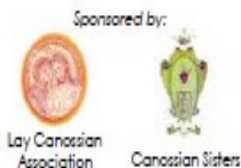
directed by:  
**Father Michael Estaris**

Saturday, March 4, 2017  
Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall  
1951 North Avenue - Sacramento, CA

- 08:00 a.m. Arrival & Hospitality
- 08:30 a.m. Welcoming and Introductions
- 08:45 a.m. Opening Prayer
- 09:00 a.m. Part 1 - Fr. Michael Estaris
- 09:45 a.m. BREAK
- 10:00 a.m. Part 2 - Fr. Michael Estaris
- 10:30 a.m. Communal Penance Service
- 11:00 a.m. MASS - Fr. Michael Estaris, Celebrant
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH (BRING A BROWN-BAG LUNCH)
- 01:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

*"Share the Joy ~ Bring a Friend!"*

R.S.V.P  
lc.lentretreat@gmail.com  
Or 916-925-4001



	Mass/Intentions	Activities
<b>Saturday</b> 11th	5:00 pm / Cresencia de Guzman S.I.	10:00 am CFF Classes 2:00 pm Wedding 3:30 pm Baptism 5:00 pm World Day for the Sick Mass
<b>Sunday</b> 12th	7:30 am / John & Marie Cottle + 9:00 am / Rosa & Domenico Bellocchi S.I. 11:00 am / Pacita Resuello + 1:00 pm Spanish/ Adrian Ezparza & Juanamaria de Anda S.I. 3:00 pm Chinese 5:00 pm / Rosemary Armstrong + 7:00 pm Spanish / Parish Intentions	9:00 am RCIA class for children and teens 9:30 am RCIA Breaking of the Word 11:00 am Liturgy of the Word for Children 11:15 am Spanish CCD classes
<b>Monday</b> 13th	12:10 pm / Patrick Shaw S.I. 5:10 pm / Mercado Jauregui Family S.I.	6:30 pm RCIA Evening Prayer 7:00 pm RCIA Class
<b>Tuesday</b> 14th	12:10pm/ Joseph Lam Than + 5:10 pm / Marie Rachel Tondjo +	6:00 pm Spanish Choir for the 7pm Mass 7:00 pm English Confirmation classes 7:15 pm The Men's Club
<b>Wednesday</b> 15th	12:10 pm / Jim McDermott + 5:10 pm / Eli Rainey S.I.	7:00 pm Communion & Liberation 7:00 pm Spanish Choir for the 1pm Mass 7:15 pm English Choir Rehearsal
<b>Thursday</b> 16th	12:10 pm / Maria de Nel Tu A Loan + 5:10 pm / Kim Wallace S.I.	7:00 pm Bible Timeline Class
<b>Friday</b> 17th	12:10 pm / Abdul Mani + <b>S.I.- Special Intentions</b>	7:30 pm Rosary Recitation at St. Junipero's Statue in Capitol Park <b>+ - Deceased</b>

## Pray For One Another

Aubrey Abernathy  
Ahern Family  
John D. Amaro  
Lisa Angelo  
Brandon Barrows  
Brown Family  
George Burns  
Lourdes Casimiro  
Charles Cordima  
Adelaine, John Ray,  
Ella, & Laura David  
Mary Guillory-Degas  
DeMello Family  
Mark Dougherty  
Robin Dunton  
Olin Fong

Robyn Freeman  
Debbie Freitag  
Roberta Freitag  
Jeremy  
Harry Gabo  
Monica Gabo  
Luis Gutierrez  
Scott Hespeler  
Dayna Hurtado  
Kati Jansen  
Carol "CJ" Jenkins  
Timothy Jimenez  
Norma Katindoy  
Joseph Crawford  
Leon  
David Leveille  
Marcelino Macarulay

Virginia Mancenido  
Charles, Darlene,  
Roberta, Peter,  
& Robert B. Martinez  
Cynthia Matulia  
Lee McClure  
Nellie Medina  
Blanca Padilla  
Nilda Medina  
Michael Jose Mejia  
Delia Melsness  
Cloraine Miura  
Maria Elena Monzani  
Eugenio Negrete  
Elizabeth Paul  
Rosemary Plain  
Hilda Plancarte

Alex Quiroz  
Johnny Ramirez  
Arturo Ramos  
Dominic Renzi  
Joanne Renzi  
Edwin Rocha  
Rogelio Rodriguez  
Maria Rokomasi  
Scott Rush  
Daling Santos  
Lorna Soderberg  
Sheetz Family  
Lily Da Silva  
Rose Mary Stadler  
Brian Swann  
Jeoff Swann  
Ida Thomas  
Norma Thureon  
Charles J. Urrutia, Sr

Let us pray for you or your loved ones. Submit your prayer request on  
cathedralsacramento.org or email: cbsprayer3@yahoo.com