



LIVING YOUR FAITH

February 23, 2014

Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope...

What kind of God is this? Everything is turned upside down in this week's readings!

"Love your neighbor as yourself," we hear first. The Psalmist sings out: "Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes." In case we weren't paying attention, the second reading makes it extra clear: "the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God..."

Then, the Gospel, not once but twice, Jesus begins with the phrase, "You have heard it said..." and continues to illustrate his point with the phrase, "but I say to you..." providing such simple direct examples that we might not quite notice that he is challenging our deepest assumptions and most normal behaviors.

Here's what we see in every reading this Sunday: a God who loves us and wants us to be in close, loving relationship with Him, each other, and all creation.

This God of ours is a God who calls us into unique, healing relationships. Our God calls us to notice the effects of our choices, to be responsible for not only our own well-being, but that of our neighbors as well. In this Good News way of being, it is time to realize that we're awfully foolish sometimes, putting our faith in things that are not of enduring value, not of eternal, relentless love. We're called by these readings to look at the world through new eyes, and to turn away from the foolish things that have distracted us. We are invited to turn away from the choices that destroy us, break us down and keep us from being in a full, whole, holy relationship with our Creator, each other, and all of creation. Our God wants to embrace us and welcome us, to heal us and sustain us, no matter how many times we have turned away, become distracted or chosen to distance ourselves. That's not the way our power-structures usually work—but this ever-loving God of ours turns everything upside down and invites us back, always.

This is the kind of Church we are called to be: a family of forgiveness, of hope, of love. We are called to be a community who embodies this love that welcomes everyone back, reconciling again and again and again. We are called to continue this mission of love, as described recently by Pope Francis in these words: "Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."

As we did last year, this year, we will again be having an opportunity for all to celebrate the Sacrament at **An Evening of Confession to be held at all our parish churches in the Diocese of Cleveland on Wednesday, March 12th from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm.**

"God's forgiveness is stronger than any sin," Pope Francis reminds us. We hope that this time of preparation helps you to feel welcome to join in the celebration of confession and encouraged to invite someone you know to return to church, knowing that they will be warmly welcomed as they come back to practice their faith.

Diocesan Wide

An Evening of Confession

March 12, 2014
5–8 pm



www.WelcomeCatholics.com

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An Evening of Confession

12 March 2014 ~ 5-8 p.m.

Examination of Conscience 2 (Based on the Beatitudes)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, God is with them always.

Do I put God first in my life, praying in gratitude during good times and for help in bad times? Do others trust me to follow through with things I promise to do?

Blessed are those who are sad, for they will be comforted.

Have I reached out to those who are sad, suffering or grieving? Do I visit sick, lonely or elderly members of my family and community? Do I share what I have with those in need? Have I given my time and talent to my parish?

Blessed are the meek and gentle, for they receive what God has promised.

Do I sometimes want people to pay attention only to me? Do I express gratitude when others help me?

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Do I seek justice for others, especially for the poor and weak? Am I envious of what other people have? Are family and friends more important to me than material possessions? Have I been a good steward of the resources of the earth?

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.

Do I ask forgiveness of those I have offended? Have I made a sincere effort to forgive those who have hurt me? Am I willing to give others the benefit of the doubt? Do I judge people quickly and harshly?

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Is loving God and others important to me? Am I always as loving as I can be? Do I seek God in prayer, in the sacraments and in regular attendance at Mass?

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Do I contribute to conflict by harsh criticism, bitterness or gossip? Am I willing to make peace with people who want to make peace with me? Do I ever take the first step in making peace with someone?

Blessed are those who do what is right, even when others treat them unfairly. The kingdom of God belongs to them.

Do I "go along with the crowd" because I fear the consequences of standing up for the truth? When choosing what to say or do, do I always say or do what I know is right?

Prayer of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.