

Day 149 – Sunday, August 16

In the past few weeks I have given you some articles on the Sacrament of Baptism. Most of this material was stuff I found on the internet. [Today](#) I would like to move into the sacrament of Reconciliation. If you are like most people, you have probably said to yourself, “I hate going to confession!” Most people would rather have a colostomy than celebrate this sacrament. There was a time I had the same attitude; let me tell you something that happened to me that changed my understanding of this sacrament.

It was during my retreat to prepare for my Diaconate (becoming a Deacon) year 5 of a 6 year journey, to priesthood. I went to my retreat director, and I knew I had to go to confession (as that was part of the retreat process) and I glared at him, gritted my teeth and said, “I HATE GOING TO CONFESSION. What he said completely changed my understanding of this sacrament. He said, “You hate giving God the opportunity to forgive you and pour his love onto your soul. I responded, “NNNNNOOOOOOOO.” You see we all think this sacrament is all about us. I have to tell my sins to a priest. This sacrament is not about us, this sacrament, as is every sacrament is all about God, and what he does. We can never think that God is an Ogre, waiting for us to slip up so he can send us to hell. Jesus has taught us that his Father is a loving God, whose greatest desire is that we be with him for all eternity. This is why many people refer to this sacrament as the “Sacrament of Reconciliation.”

Words have power and the sheer mention of them bring images and feelings into our souls. In Saskatchewan as soon as you hear the word “Winter” you immediately have images and feelings of cold, snow, short days and long nights. If you say “let’s go to the lake.” You have images and feelings of warmth, sun, cool water, picnics. The same is true for this sacrament. If you hear the word “Confession” your immediate thought is being locked up in a small room, baring your soul to another person. If you hear the word “Penance” you hear, “I have to do something difficult, like kneel on frozen peas, or recite ten Rosaries. But when you hear the word “Reconciliation.” You are filled with peace, because something that was once broken, has been completely healed.

In the story of the Prodigal Son, the Father does not berate the younger son for having nearly ruined the family farm. He does not ask him where he has been, or who all the people he is with. The Father can only rejoice, because his son, who wished his father dead (You don’t get an inheritance until the person is dead) has come home, and the only response is joy. Hence it is time to party.

In the following days I will send out a number of articles that elaborate in our way or another, the sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the light of eternity, we’re here for a very short time, really. We’re here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein