

## Day 150 – Monday, August 17

The Sacrament of Reconciliation... Hmmm, just what do these ‘big’ words actually mean? Let’s take this time to unpack their meaning.

### **A Sacrament**

First, “sacrament”. Do you love somebody – parents, spouse, children, and friends? Now, how do these persons experience your loving affection and commitment towards them? Well, perhaps, you tell them that you love them, you hug them, you spend time with them, you help them with homework and you share a meal together. In this case, the gift of your love for these persons **does not simply remain in your heart but it is outwardly expressed in very concrete and palpable ways**. In simple terms, we can understand the word ‘sacrament’ as the concrete and palpable ways by which your love is actually and really expressed.

In John 3:16, God expresses His love for the world, for us: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”* You see – God’s love for us is not something that God keeps to himself. In Jesus Christ, the love of God for all humanity finds its most concrete and palpable expression. Here, we can say that Jesus Christ is the sacrament of the love of God.

In his public ministry, Jesus used very concrete and palpable ways to make known to people the love that God has for them: he cured their diseases, he fed them, he taught them about God the Father, and, of course, Jesus allowed them to experience God’s love and mercy by calling them to repentance and forgiving their sins. And Jesus, because he is God, is able to forgive sins (see Mark 2:1-12).

Moreover, Jesus shared and entrusted to the Apostles his special ministry of making known and experienced God’s love and mercy (see John 20:22-23; also Matthew 16:16-19). That the Church continues to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation even [today](#) is our way of acknowledging the real gift of God’s love and mercy for us, and of remaining true to this great responsibility that Jesus gave us.

*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