

Season of Lent - Week Two

Pray

*Lord Jesus Christ,
You show us the glory of the Father,
the God of mercy and forgiveness,
the God who is love.*

*Help us to trust fully in your divine mercy
and rely completely on your unending
love.*

*Teach us to be merciful,
as the Father is merciful,
that the whole world may know
and trust in your merciful love.*

*We ask this through the intercession of
Mary, Mother of Mercy.*



Introduction - An Encounter with Mercy

God loves us right where we are, but he loves us too much to leave us there. In the last session we looked at guilt as a wakeup call—a way to turn our attention back to God when we have sinned.

In this session we will look more closely at God's invitation to encounter his mercy and healing in a very real and tangible way in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Video ~ Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession Session 2: An Encounter with Mercy

Watch the video episode ~ Session 2 “An Encounter with Mercy.”

To access the video: log onto www.formed.org

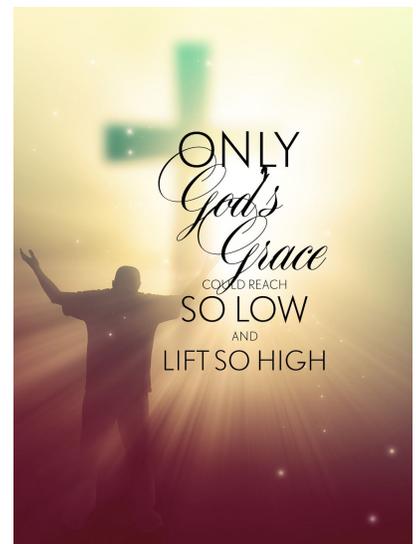
- Click “**sign up**” to register for a **free** account.
- Choose “sign up as a parishioner.”
- Create a new account either enter Canton Catholic Community (1860 Washington St.) or enter 02021.

It is easy to register, you simply use your email address and create a password. Once on the Formed site: **Go to the "Programs" tab at the top of the page and choose "The Sacraments" from the drop down and select the program "Forgiven."**

Reflection

In the last session we looked at how God uses our feelings of guilt as a “wake-up call” to draw us back to him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When sin leads us to hide from God, he comes searching for us. In this session we will look more closely at God’s merciful love and how he wants to heal us in this sacrament.

The heavy burden of guilt often leads us to feel that our mistakes define us—that we are not merely sinners but that we are our sins. But this is not how God sees us. Pope St. John Paul II said, “We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son” (Homily at World Youth Day in Toronto, July 28, 2002). God knows our sins, and he loves us anyway. And because of his great love for us, he continually invites us to repent and turn again to him.



Sin always damages our relationships with God and with others, and, depending on the gravity of the sin, it may rupture these relationships. This is why we need God's healing grace: because it heals those broken or damaged relationships. He calls us to the Sacrament of Reconciliation not only to forgive us and wash away our sins, but also to heal our wounds and the root causes of our sins. He does this by his own power and authority, but he wills us to do so through the mediation of the priest, another human being—so that we can encounter God's love and mercy in a very real, tangible way.

God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins so that we might be saved. Through Baptism we are given the incredible gift of sanctifying grace, which is the divine life of God in our souls. However, this gift of sanctifying grace can be lost through mortal sin. If a sinner were to die without sanctifying grace, the consequences would be eternal separation from God (Hell). For this reason, Jesus gave us the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to forgive those sins committed after Baptism.

It is important to remember that Confession is not just a place to get our slates wiped clean. It is a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ in which he pours his healing love into our hearts. It is an encounter with Mercy himself.

Meditation Song:

Father I have Sinned

<https://youtu.be/vq8JNLwX5sM>

Responding to God's Grace

This week spend time with God in prayer.

Use this scripture or one of your own choice and reflect on it.

Visit formed.org for additional content and reflections.

The story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8:2–11 presents us with a beautiful image of the mercy and grace offered to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Read through this passage slowly and prayerfully:

“Early in the morning [Jesus] came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?’

This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, ‘Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.’ And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.’” –John 8:2–11

Prayerfully consider, This story tells us about people who came to Jesus with different mindsets. The Pharisees and scribes were sure they were right and the woman knew that she had done wrong. The effecting of meeting Jesus and letting Him into their lives changes them powerfully. The Pharisees and scribes, through the words of Jesus were able to see that they too were sinners, like the woman they were accusing and they were not perfect. The woman, expecting to be punished for her error, received a lovely acceptance from Jesus which must have left a lasting impression on her.

A meeting with Jesus is always a life-giving experience, as he himself has said “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Imagine yourself in this passage. Visit formed.org for the complete reflection.

“Peace be with you.”

But then he added, “Receive the holy Spirit.

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them”

(John 20:19-23)

Content contains excerpts from the formed.org Forgiven Study Guide. Please visit formed.org for the complete content and workbook.