

**ANSWERS TO
QUESTIONS
ABOUT
MERCY &
CONFESSION**

OUR LADY OF VICTORY

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

INTRODUCTION

- **For us Catholics**
 - Cherish our beliefs!
 - Solidly founded in Sacred Scripture
- **For non-Catholics**
 - Stumbling block
 - “I confess my sins directly to God.”
- **Evangelization**
 - Jesus is the Face of Mercy
 - Jesus gave clear directions to His disciples
 - “mercy” found 467 times in the Bible

APOSTLES' CREED

...I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saint,

the forgiveness of sins,

and life everlasting. Amen.

MERCY

- **Justice – giving the deserving punishment**
- **Clemency – giving a reduced sentence**
- **Mercy – wipes away the sentence**
- **Forgiveness – treats offense as if it never happened**

MERCY

- Justice & Mercy must work hand in hand
- Justice without Mercy is cruelty
- Mercy without Justice is a delusion

Heinrich von Kleist's Prince Fredrick of Homburg

MERCY

- **Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller: “God’s mercy does not dispense us from following his commandments or the rules of the Church.”**
- **For Jesus to dispense His infinite Mercy and forgive us our sins, Justice must be served by the recognition of our sins**
- **For this reason Justice demands that we state our sins to receive Jesus’ mercy; but once stated His mercy and forgiveness has no bounds**

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

John 20:19-23

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.**" And when he had said this, **he breathed on them,** and said to them, **"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."**

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

John 20:19-23

- Jesus said these words on Easter Sunday
- Jesus “breathed” on the Apostles
 - Typology: Genesis 2:7 – God breathed on man
- Jesus gives *authority to forgive*, not *to forgive*
- Jesus came for the forgiveness of sins; Jesus sends out His Apostles to complete the same mission.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

***“I confess my sins to God.
Catholics confess their sins to a priest.”***

- Catholics confess their sins to God through His minister, St. Paul sure thought so...

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and ***gave us the ministry of reconciliation***; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

James 5:14-15

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; **and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**

The priest has authority to forgive sins, something that the ordinary Christian does not have.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- **Examination of conscience**
- **State time since last confession**
- **State number and kind of sins since last confession, any mortal sins from previous confession that have not been confessed**
- **Priest gives advice and renders a penance**
- **Recite Act of Contrition**
- **Priest recites the Absolution Prayer**

INDULGENCES

What is an indulgence?

...a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfaction of Christ and the saints.

~ *Catechism* 1471

INDULGENCE

**For every sin, two consequences follow:
guilt and punishment**

- Guilt (eternal) is removed with forgiveness
- Punishment (temporary) must still be paid

Boys playing baseball analogy

Matthew 18:18

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

INDULGENCES

Proverbs 16:6

By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

Daniel 4:24-27

Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your tranquility.

Tobit 12:8-9

Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fullness of life.

Matthew 6:1-18

...when you give alms...when you pray...when you fast...[do so] in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Acts 10:4

Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

INDULGENCE

Plenary Indulgence

- Removes all punishment due to sin
- Examples: 30 minutes before Blessed Sacrament; 30 minutes reading Scripture; Stations of the Cross; Holy Rosary
- Requirements: Be in the state of grace, Holy Communion, Prayers for the Holy Father, Confession (within 3 weeks; 6 week rule of thumb)

Partial Indulgence

- Removes some punishment due to sin
- Types: Prayers, Fasting, Almsgiving, Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy
- Examples: visits to the Blessed Sacrament; visits to a cemetery; wearing a crucifix, scapular, holy medal; teaching or studying Catholic doctrine for any length of time

WORKS OF MERCY

Spiritual

- To instruct the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To admonish sinners
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive offences willingly
- To comfort the afflicted
- To pray for the living and the dead

Corporal

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To house the homeless
- To visit the sick
- To ransom the captive
- To bury the dead

FACE OF MERCY