

Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:

Message for December 2017

Dear Friends in Christ;

I can say just as easily as most Roman Catholics that I don't go to confession enough. It's not that I don't understand the Sacrament or appreciate the grace. It's that I don't put it high enough on my priority list and take advantage of being around other priests, ask and GO! It is as simple as that. I love confessing my sins. I love being absolved by a priest. Sometimes we just don't do the things that are good for us. Let's take a look at some practical and pastoral things about confessing our sins in our discussion this Upper Room.

To Christ through Mary;

Fr. David

*Open with Sign of Cross and **Prayer to the Holy Spirit***

L: Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

L: Let us pray – God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

L: You, O Lord, will open my lips.

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: Incline unto my aid, O God.

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

- 1) Read John 20:19-23
 - Is there a connection to breathing on the apostles, showing His wounds and Christ's power to forgive sins? Or what is the point of these actions? Discuss
- 2) What are the essential elements of confession? (Hint: Baltimore Catechism)
- 3) How would you discuss this issue? Someone says: "I don't go to confession because I do the same things and confess the same things over and over. I never conquer these sins. It's pointless."
- 4) Compare Confession with a Priest to Therapy with a Psychologist. Now discuss how there is a place for both and what those parameters are, and where they may cross.
- 5) Every sacrament (but Confession) has "matter" with the "form" to go along with it. Most old catechisms say that the matter is the "sin," but we know that "sin" per se does not have a physical form. If you could ascribe a physical reality to this sacred sign of confession, what would that physical thing be? (no right answer here – this is speculative)
- 6) What is the role of the penance given by the priest? Do you think that penances should be more creative and intense?
- 7) Discuss the seal of confession. What is it again? Because of the seal, is it necessary to conceal your voice or confess behind the screen in the confessional? Why the screen if the Seal? What is the Church's position on absolute anonymity or confidentiality in the sacrament? Does this apply to child abuse or murder too?
- 8) Each Sorrowful Mystery has a connection to the Sacrament of Confession. Discuss these connections provided and others if you discern them:
 - Agony in the Garden (sin causing stress)
 - Scourging at the pillar (sin opens us up to more and more ugliness)
 - Crowning of Thorns (the mind (head) is the source for all sin)
 - Carrying of the Heavy Cross (sin weighs us down)
 - Jesus is crucified and dies on the cross (death to sin – life in Christ)
- 9) Name other ways that sins are forgiven and compare these with making a confession to a priest. What elements are missing or what makes confessing to a priest more of a profound experience (or not really)?

Prayer:

Read John 8:1-11 add some silence and then pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet

Next month's UPPER ROOM is on the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick