



Preparing Your Heart for Christmas-Celebrating the Sacrament of Confession

Take time to prepare at home...

Set aside some time to prepare before going to receive the sacrament of Confession.

Light a candle...

Begin by making the sign of the cross...In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ask God to open your mind and heart

... to know your need for his love and forgiveness

... to hear his confession of love for you

... to acknowledge the times when you have turned away from his love and sinned

Read and reflect on the following...

When we go to Confession, we are responding to an invitation from Jesus.

Jesus has invited us. He wants to give us a gift – that gift is his confession of love and forgiveness.

For us to be able to accept that gift we need to make space in our lives. We make that space by confessing our need for Jesus – our need for his love and forgiveness. We do not do this on our own. We do it as members of his family – his body – the Church community.

When we were baptised, we became parts of the body of Christ. Jesus needs us to be his love and compassion in the world. When we do not do this, we sin. When we sin we are not faithful to our baptism.

The celebration of the sacrament of Confession allows us to reclaim the joy and belonging of our baptism.

An examination of conscience

Read the story of the Rich Young Man (Mk 10:17-22) Use the questions to reflect on how you are responding to God's call to live your life to the full and trust in god.

If you have a Bible at home read the story of the Rich Young Man in the Gospel of Mark (10:17-22)

In Matthew's Gospel we find the story of the Rich Young Man who came and knelt before Jesus and asked him what good he had to do to gain eternal life. Jesus told the rich young man that he must keep the Ten Commandments. The young man told Jesus that he had kept the commandments and asked if there was anything else that he needed to do? Before answering him, Jesus looked at the young man with great love and then told him that he should go and sell everything he had and to give the money to those who were poor and follow him. However, the young man was a very wealthy young man and he walked away from Jesus, feeling very sad.

The rich young man knelt before Jesus.

Do I acknowledge Jesus in my life?

Do I have space for him?

Do I seek and respect his opinion?

The rich young man wanted to inherit eternal life.

Do I want to be close to Jesus always?

Do I want to do the best I can with my life?

Do I believe that I can achieve heaven by the way I live on earth?

Jesus asked the rich young man did he keep the Ten Commandments.

Do I keep the Ten Commandments?

Do I realise that rather than stopping me doing things they free me to be myself?

Do I respect myself as the beautiful creation that God made me?

Jesus looked steadily at the rich young man and loved him.

Do I believe that Jesus looks at me and loves me?

Do I believe that Jesus wants to share my life?

Do I believe that Jesus believes in me?

Jesus told the rich young man to sell everything he had and give the money to the poor.

Do I make space for Jesus in my life by helping those in need?

Do I recognise the face of Jesus in those who are marginalised and disrespected?

Do I recognise everybody in the world as my sister or brother equal in the eyes of God?

Jesus then told the rich young man to follow him.

Do I believe that Jesus has a plan for my life?

Do I make an effort to discover that plan?

Do I trust Jesus enough to accept his plan?

The rich young man went away sad.

Do I choose the way of Jesus or do my own thing?

Do I accept that sin brings sadness?

Do I accept that true happiness can only be found in Jesus?

After your time of reflection say the Act of Sorrow

O, my God, I thank you for loving me.

I am sorry for all my sins. For not loving others and for not loving you,

Help me to live like Jesus, and not sin again,

Amen

During Advent, if possible, try and attend the sacrament of Confession in your parish-it doesn't matter how long it has been since you last went-like the Father in the Prodigal Son, God waits for you with open arms.

