



St Peter Julian's Newsletter

Blessed Sacrament Congregation

October 2018

Volume 11 Issue 10

SPOTLIGHT ON CONFESSION

Mass Times

Saturday Vigil: 5.30pm

Sunday:

9.30, 11.00am (Chinese),

12.30, 3.30, 5.00pm

(Korean)

1st Sunday:

1.30pm (Filipino)

1st & 3rd Saturday:

2.15pm (Indonesian)

Monday to Friday:

7.30am, 12.10, 5.30pm

Saturday:

12.10pm & Vigil at 5.30pm

Public Holidays:

12.10pm



St Peter Julian's
641 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Postal Address:
PO Box K334,
Haymarket NSW 1240

Phone: (02) 9270 6900
Fax: (02) 9270 6933

Download monthly
newsletter at:
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Confession has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Victims of sexual abuse and the media have loudly criticised the church's refusal to allow priests to report admissions of sexual abuse made in the course of confession. Sadly, this storm has obscured the fact that church authorities have accepted every other recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, even if belatedly and somewhat conditionally.

But just as the Royal Commission has done the church a favour by exposing the shameful behaviour of both perpetrators and authorities, so too has its focus on confession. It has thrust confession into the limelight, at least momentarily, in a way that prompts us to fresh reflection on its role in church life. To say the least, that role has diminished greatly in recent decades. The sacrament of penance, to give confession its official name, is not in a good state of health.

Confession in decline

For better or for worse, far fewer Catholics are celebrating the sacrament, and those that do may not be making the best use of it. Some of the reasons for this are easy enough to spell out. The most recent one is the catastrophic loss of trust in the church and its ministers as a result of the scandal of sexual abuse. But a much earlier factor was the publication in 1968 of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* with its condemnation of artificial contraception. Many Catholics made their own conscientious decision about birth control and as a result chose not to come to confession. This choice has grown into a more comprehensive resistance to sexual norms determined by the celibate male authority figures of the church.

This protest fits in with the well-established and widespread trend towards suspicion of established authorities in favour of personal autonomy. The church is only one of many social

institutions now viewed with mistrust. Western culture favours the idea that individuals can and should make their own choices, select their own values, and establish their own identities. Like-minded peer groups, whether in person or on-line, are the new authorities. Personal difficulties and setbacks are dealt with by therapists and life coaches. All this takes place in a culture of success at all costs. In politics ethics are trumped by the drive for power and in business by the primacy of profit.

Healthy change

But all is not doom and gloom. There are some good reasons why Catholics are making much less use of the sacrament of penance. One is the clearer realisation that God is Love, and Love is to be embraced, not feared. To the extent that penitents used to line up for confession out of guilt or fear of punishment, then the change to a climate of love is welcome. When sin is understood as a failure of love rather than a failure of obedience, the way is paved for a healthier use of confession.

The other change for the better is the realisation that there are many ways in which the loving mercy of God is mediated. In fact the ordinary sacrament of reconciliation is the Mass. Two of the moments where forgiveness is made explicit are the penitential rite at the start of Mass and the prayers of the Communion rite. In addition, reading the word of God, works of mercy and personal prayer are all occasions when healing of the heart can occur. And of course, offering an apology and making peace with someone we have hurt is a concrete act of reconciliation.

Reversing rupture

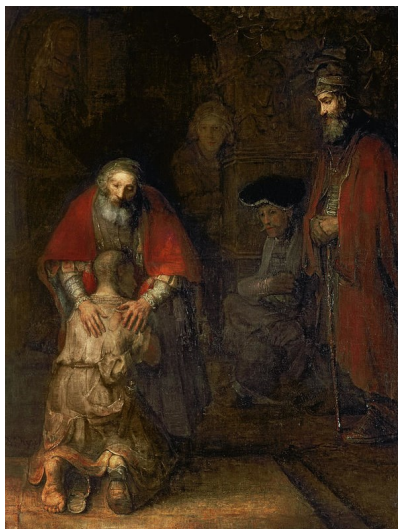
Among all these options the sacrament of penance has its proper place. Its original and enduring role is to allow a person who has made choices completely at odds with the love of self, neighbour and God to admit their fault and to

Email: haymarket@blessedsacrament.com.au

Websites: www.stpeterjuliansydney.com
www.blessedsacrament.com.au

have these relationships restored. These choices are ones that fundamentally contradict, deny and disrupt the bond of love. As such they have a destructive effect on the community, both as church and society. In this case reconciliation is clearly not a private matter between the individual and God, but a collective action that reconnects the sinner with the communities that he or she has harmed or diminished.

When such sinners seek forgiveness because the wrongness of their choices has dawned on them and they genuinely repent of their actions and sincerely desire to make amends, the sacrament of penance comes into its own. By entrusting all into God's merciful hands, a fresh start becomes possible.



Promoting health

But the use of the sacrament is not restricted to the serious sinner. It is a means of growth for all who want to live a good life and who are prepared to be honest about themselves before God. These are people who are choosing, as best they can, to love with all their heart and mind and soul and strength. These are people who are as much grateful for their strengths as they are aware of their failings. They are attracted by the person of Jesus and fascinated by his freedom, his presence, his power, his compassion and his courage. They have heard and answered his call to a life of continual conversion. They want to follow his way.

For such as these, the sacrament of penance offers a graced opportunity to own their humanity in all its glory and shame. They are not driven by fear or guilt but guided by a heartfelt desire for the good. They are free enough to look searchingly at the quality of their loving and to admit where they have betrayed themselves and others and God. They are conscious of the harm that spreads out into the community from what they have done and what they have failed to do. They know the value of presenting themselves in person and naming their failures. They are willing to count on the un-failing mercy of God.

Grace and mercy

That's what Pope Francis had to say with characteristic flair in his apostolic exhortation of 2013, "The Joy of the Gospel."

I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy that spurs us on to do our best. A small step in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties. Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's love, which is mysteriously at work in each person, above and beyond their faults and failings (#44).

George Wilson SJ echoes the Pope nicely with this thought: "It turns out, after all, that the last thing a confession is about is sin. Instead it's all about a grace-filled meeting: between a pilgrim taking one more step along the way toward human integrity and authenticity before God, and that same God who inspired the effort and now bestows its fulfillment. Paul names the mystery so well: "Where sin increased, God's grace increased even more."ⁱ

ⁱ George Wilson SJ. "Confessional Blessings." *Worship* Vol 92, July 2018, 364.

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SINGERS—SOLOISTS—SOPRANOS

Available for Weddings, Special Occasions, Funerals, Memorial Services.

For details, please contact our Receptionist.

Healing After Abortion

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries offers a confidential voicemail number: 0400 092 555. Healing retreats are held regularly in the Sydney area offering women and men a spiritual way through grief and loss. A brochure can be downloaded at the website: www.rachelsvineyard.org.au

The next healing retreat will be held 16-18 November. The retreat offers a sanctuary in which to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion in a safe, supportive, confidential and non judgmental environment.

The What and Why of Liturgy- Communion from the Tabernacle - Br Luke Thorp SSS



Tabernacles were created as a place to reserve the Eucharistic species (the consecrated hosts) as a means of allowing those who could not be present at the celebration of the Eucharist to receive Holy Communion at another time. Generally, it would

be a sick person that Communion was taken to. Gradually, the custom of praying before the tabernacle developed. One reason was that Communion became less frequent and people wanted to somehow feel close to the Eucharist but would not partake of Holy Communion.

The Church teaches that it is the act of the entire assembly, presided over by an ordained priest, that makes the Eucharist whole and entire: the celebration, the offering, the sacrifice and the species. When Communion is given from the tabernacle, that symbolises the work of a previous Eucharistic

celebration. It would be like going to a friend's home for dinner and watching your host eat a meal they had prepared themselves and then giving you something that was left over from a previous dinner. We partake of the one Bread as we are one body, the body of Christ.

The purpose of Holy Communion is not just union with Jesus. It's union with the whole People of God, the Church. That's why eating and running - receiving Communion and leaving the church early - should never occur. Again it would be like going to a friend's for dinner, a friend who had taken the time to prepare a lavish meal for you, and then getting up from the table and leaving.

Occasionally Communion from the tabernacle is given if there is a large crowd (and of course for the sick) and the number of hosts consecrated at the celebration run out. However, this is the exception. We need to remember that the Church always sets an ideal before us in liturgy. Sometimes, for pastoral reasons, that ideal cannot be obtained. But we should never lose sight of it.

Be Awake National Catholic Men's Conference

"Be Awake; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." Cor 16:13-16

"Where are you men of God? Are you AWAKE?" MenAlive and the Young Men of God Movement have united to host a life-changing event for the men of this nation. The conference will bring the very best of MenAlive's hugely successful MAX conference, and the unrivalled strength of the Young Men of God National Conference. There is nothing like the journey of growing in faith alongside your brothers. There will be great speakers, worship, prayer, sacraments, sports and brotherhood time. Be inspired, be transformed at this extraordinary event not to be missed! To register go to menalive.org.au or ymgmovement.org

Plenary Council 2020

The Plenary Council 2020 is a gathering of the Church in Australia to make decisions for the future.

How you can be involved:

- Talk with your parish priest about becoming a parish ambassador or to know more contact 9390 5100 or plenarycouncil@sydneycatholic.org
- Look out for a listening and dialogue session near you or for more details contact 9390 5100, or plenarycouncil@sydneycatholic.org
- Make an individual and direct response to the national Plenary Council, via: <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say/>
- Share your response with the Archdiocese of Sydney, via: plenarycouncil@sydneycatholic.org
- Want to know more? Watch the videos at: <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/watch/>



MONTHLY MASSES & EVENTS

Catholic Indonesian Community Mass,

1st & 3rd Saturdays (**6 & 20 October**) at 2.15pm
Harry Liong 0425 918 925.

Chinese Community Mass (Cantonese) Mass every Sunday at 11.00am. Simon Liu 0411 377 618.

Korean Community Mass every Sunday at 5.00pm.
Lucian Jin Young Noh 0451 465 857.

Filipino Community Mass, 1st Sunday (**7 October**) at 1.30pm. Juliet Byrne 0437 045 945.

Holy Trinity Community (Adoration). Eucharistic Adoration **2nd & 4th Saturdays (13 & 27 October)** at 3.00pm. Jence Oesman 0414 506 770.

Mass of Anointing every 1st Saturday (**Feb-Dec**) (**6 October**) at 12.10pm.

Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, 2nd Saturday (**Feb-Dec**) at 12.10pm
Mass followed by meeting. Fr Marcellus Glynn SSS (02) 9270 6900. (**Next meeting 13 October**).

Life in the Eucharist (LITE) every 4th Saturday (**27 October**) in the Hall at 1.30pm.

St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary.

The **12.10pm Thursday** Eucharist is offered for members of the St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary. (For information on becoming a member please speak to the Receptionist).



LIFE IN THE EUCHARIST (LITE) MEETING

In this presentation to the LITE group Fr Rosario chose to speak on the 'Eucharist down the Ages.' This report is taken from the hand-out notes provided by Fr Rosario.

We looked at the various changes which have occurred over the years and how the celebration of the Eucharist has changed. It was interesting to see how the celebration was adapted to suit the needs of the time. Firstly, we looked at the period of the Franco-Roman liturgy (6th to 10th Century A.D.) King Charlemagne of France wanted to adapt Roman liturgy to the Galican liturgy of France and he gave this work to Alcuin the Benedictine monk, who produced the Franco-Roman liturgy. Some elements of this liturgy brought changes such as communion rails being introduced thus separating the priest from the people; the altar was moved back to the rear wall; the host became a thin round white wafer (for the sake of convenience); multiple gestures were introduced such as signs of the cross, blessings, incensing and multiple kissing of the altar.

Further changes were seen during the Gothic period (1054 to 1517 A.D.) Apart from the specific architecture of this time, some characteristics of the Eucharist during this period were the role of the celebrant, who now celebrated mass with his back to the people. People began to affirm the real presence by contemplating and adoring Christ in the bread. Thus the practice of elevating the host and chalice after the consecration came into practice. Vestments were embroidered with highly artistic decorations and around the year 1200 A.D., Pope Innocent III assigned liturgical colours for the various masses.

In 1542, Pope Paul III convoked the Council of Trent. This shaped Catholicism right up to Vatican II. There were some great teachings of Trent on the Eucharist.

After the Council of Trent, Vatican II was an important one with regard to its contribution to the liturgy. In general, Vatican II is pastorally oriented. It spoke about the meaningful celebrations and participation of laity. The key word in the constitution on the liturgy is '**participation**'. The second Vatican Council has taken the people from 'Seeing' Mass and 'Hearing' Mass, to '**Celebrating**' Mass. This could be achieved because the entire Eucharist was celebrated in vernacular languages and people could not only participate, but understand what was going on. Saying rosaries during mass and reading prayer books, slowly came to an end. People started to receive communion daily. Vernacular hymns were being composed and used in liturgical celebrations. The new missal had four Eucharistic prayers.

The encyclical letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharista*, which was published in April 2003 by Pope John Paul II is another sign of the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the church. The encyclical speaks about the relationship between the life and mission of the church and its relationship to the Eucharist.

As we have seen the historical and theological changes of the Eucharist over the centuries, we will be aware of the fact that the present liturgy and theology of the Eucharist, is an answer to the need of the various phases of the history of Christianity.

At the last Provincial Chapter meeting of the Indian Province, Fr Rosario was elected and appointed to a position as the Provincial Treasurer and it was necessary for him to return to India. At this meeting the group was sorry to say farewell to Fr Rosario who had given so much of his time and talent to the group over the past few years. We wish him well in his new position and he will be remembered in our prayers. We now look forward to welcoming Fr Rosario's replacement and arrangements for this are underway. In the meantime the group still regularly meets for reflection, discussion and celebration of the Eucharist.

The LITE group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month and the next meeting will be at 1.30 pm on Saturday 27 October in the hall at St Peter Julian's church. All are welcome.