

PARISHES OF
ST PIUS X, ALDERLEY EDGE, ST BENEDICT'S, HANDFORTH AND
SACRED HEART & ST TERESA'S WILMSLOW
WEEKLY REFLECTION

Sunday 30th March 2025: Fourth Sunday in Lent - Mothering Sunday
The Sacrament of Reconciliation - It's Time to Come Home

This Sunday has been celebrated as Mothering Sunday since the Middle Ages and traditionally marked the time when Christians would return to their 'mother church'; the church in which they had been baptised.

In three week's time, across the world, new Christians will be received into the church through baptism at the beautiful Easter Vigil, the night before Easter Sunday.

We too can prepare to renew our baptismal vows at the Easter Vigil. One part of this is to wash ourselves clean of the actual sins that we all commit and which hurt our relationship with Jesus and separate us to some extent from Him.

In Luke's Gospel (15:11-31) we read the Parable of the Lost Son and we are drawn to recognise the extent to which we have squandered the Father's gifts and turned away from Him. But when the young man begins to see clearly he 'got up and went to his father'.

Luke 15:20 tells us '...But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.'

We only have to begin to turn and walk the road back to the Father and He comes *running* to meet us, delighted to see us and to welcome us home. And he does this through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Confession.

There are a number of different ways we can examine our hearts before the Sacrament - some people use the Ten Commandments as a guide, some the Beatitudes or the Litany of Humility. When we apply these to our life story since our last confession we can begin to see what competes in our hearts with God, what pushes him out of the centre of our lives and we can begin to identify the disordered attachments which lead us away from Him.

It doesn't matter if it has been two months or twenty years since we last went to Confession. Priests find great joy in hearing Confession, and in being an instrument of mercy, and they will just be delighted you showed up. But in the Sacrament of

Reconciliation, the priest acts 'in persona Christi', in the person of Christ - we are meeting Jesus. Jesus speaks the words of absolution. Jesus forgives us all of our sins.

Jesus is waiting for us and longs to meet us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and when we throw ourselves down at the foot of the cross, and leave our sins there, he is able to meet us where we are, throw his arms around us and kiss us.

As we come out of Confession we are washed clean and we can hear the words from Matthew 3:17 being spoken to us 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

Blessed Carlo Acutis said 'Always to be united with Jesus, this is my programme of life.' The Sacrament of Reconciliation *re*-unites us with Jesus. We are created to be in relationship with God and the Sacrament restores the broken relationship and gives us back the status of beloved sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, of Christ.

And as we draw ever closer to Holy Week and prepare to walk the long road to Calvary with Jesus, we can look up and see already that beyond the Cross is the Risen Son.

Rachel Grayson