

Dear Parish Family,

In all my years as a priest I have been busiest during Lent. Many people want to go to confession. During the pandemic this is not safe. The Bishop has sent us the following so that individuals will know what they can do to be forgiven without the sacrament. *Msgr. Mike*

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness and accompanied by the will or firm desire to confess, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1452).”

An act of perfect contrition requires:

1. The love of God above all things
2. The sincere desire for forgiveness
3. The ardent commitment to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when available.

Using this information, the faithful can be assured that the mercy of Christ has not abandoned them in a time of particular need. No one will be held accountable by God for sins for which one is truly sorry and which would have been confessed, had the opportunity been present. Thus, in the present circumstances, and even without sacramental confession, the solace of the Church is offered for any who have fears or anxieties about the need for confession. Individually, or in conjunction with a virtual prayer service the faithful, by one’s own Act of Perfect Contrition, he or she can receive an assurance of the forgiveness of his or her sins. Remember that this applies when Sacramental Confession is not possible and does not, in any way, diminish the ultimate need for Sacramental Confession. The person’s will to confess must be genuine and must be acted upon (with regard to mortal sins) when the present threat passes.

We can consider also the words delivered by the Supreme Pontiff on March 20, 2020:

“Many people today would tell me, ‘Father, where can I find a priest, a confessor, because I can’t leave the house? And I want to make peace with the Lord, I want him to embrace me, I want the Father’s embrace.’”

The Pope said his response would be, “Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth. Say, ‘Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,’ and ask for pardon with all your heart.”

Make an act of contrition, the Pope said, and promise God, “I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now.’ And immediately you will return to a state of grace with God.”