

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: Aren't Catholics Hypocritical? Our Penance Service.

So often, the cynical popular conception exists out there in the secular culture that being a Christian is inherently hypocritical. The perception states that we Christians come to church every Sunday pretending to be all holy and perfect, putting our best face before God, when in fact... **“aren't you Christians just as imperfect as everyone else? Why do you think you're so good and perfect?”**

This would be a good argument, except that, as with all flawed arguments, the foundational premise of the argument is faulty. We Catholic Christians can never be accused of being hypocritical, because we, in fact, do NOT pretend to be already fully holy and perfect. We don't come to church in order to supposedly “show off” our perfection to God and to others. Instead, we come to church to encounter the Lord Jesus Christ (especially in the Catholic Holy Eucharist, the full Christian worship that Jesus intended for his disciples in the Bible – see John Chapter 6 and Luke Chapter 24) in order precisely **to admit to our ongoing need for His help and His grace to work on our struggles with temptation, sin, and Satan.** After all, what do we Catholics do at the very beginning of each Holy Mass? Do we proclaim “Lord, We Are Perfect!” Uhh... no! We repeatedly proclaim, **“I confess** to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that **I have sinned...**” And also, in imitation of so many folks in the Bible, we cry out, **“Lord, Have Mercy!”** We Catholics (the original Christians) know that we are sinners in need of ongoing help and healing from the Lord. We are, actually, perhaps the **MOST authentic people in our culture** for admitting to these needs. It's the secular culture which claims no need for a Savior; we Catholics always have. And we know we have a Lord and Savior who wants so deeply to help us with our ongoing battle against sin, to heal us, to pick us back up, and to give us hope that, though difficult, holiness IS possible with His loving help.

And that's also why we Catholics (unlike other Christians) have maintained the **biblical mandate** (from John 20:23) to experience God's forgiveness in the **Sacrament of Reconciliation.** Confession is a powerful, loving, healing encounter with our Good Shepherd, where we can honestly open our soul to Him, face-to-face, in great authenticity, and in turn **receive concrete forgiveness** (He tells you, “I absolve you from your sins!”) and ongoing healing and encouragement – special graces that cannot be obtained any other way. Confession is not a trip to the Principal's Office to be “punished”, but rather a trip to the Doctors' Office to be truly healed!

Today is our **Cluster Penance Service**, to be held at **ICC from 12:30 to 2:30**, where you can experience Jesus' forgiveness and help in your walk with the Lord and in your struggles with sin. Come and experience His great love and mercy! If it's been a long time, don't fret – simply tell the priest and he will be more than happy to guide you through the sacrament and help you experience a positive encounter with the living Lord Jesus!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at hamilton.college@outlook.com or at 419-634-2626.

DID YOU KNOW? A Note From Your Parish Finance Council

[As indicated earlier, we will periodically be placing “blurbs” in the bulletin to make everyone aware of our practical, parish stewardship needs:]

The last fiscal year at Our Lady of Lourdes, we spent \$14,037 on office expenses. Much of this total includes the purchase of a new copier, but also includes a host of other miscellaneous expenses pertaining to the administrative needs of our parish. Even with efforts to be frugal, and making use of Diocesan “Central Purchasing” to get good deals, it does cost to run a parish office and pastor's office. These costs are covered by the Weekly Offertory. However, we are still running short in covering our parish expenses. Please consider an increase in your Weekly Offertory, which provides the vast majority of our needed parish income. Thanks for your generosity and support of our parish family!

THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor's Cat



Hi boys and girls! My name is “Jackie”, and as you know, I am Father Ferguson's cat. You know what? I wish I were a human like you! That's right! I mean, I like eating mice and licking my fur and eating tuna and all, but there's something you humans (especially those of you in Second Grade and older) can do that I can't do as a cat. And that's going to see Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession! That's right! Confession is made for humans, and what a great thing it is to talk to Jesus face-to-face in that Sacrament! Like a good doctor, He listens to what's been hurting your soul (your sins), and He cleans your soul and forgives you...because He loves you and wants you to be happy and holy! This Lent, don't be a cat and miss out. Be a human and tell your parents you want to come and see Jesus in Confession! Your parents will take you, because I know they love you, too, and they want you to be happy and holy as well! As for me, I have some mice to eat. Have a “purr”-fect week!

Lenten Penance Service

Sunday, March 24 ~ 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church

Exposition and Adoration

Prayer and Reflection

Confessions

12:30 pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
12:45-2:15	Quiet time for Prayer and Reflection
12:45 – 2:15	Confessions heard by Fr. Jeffrey and Fr. Ferguson
2:15 pm	Benediction and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament
2:30 pm	Dismissal



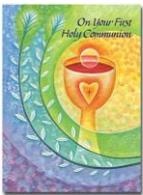
The rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction can be found on the inside back cover of the missalette.

SAVE THESE DATES!!

Parish School of Religion – Calendar & Sacraments

PSR Classes: March 24; April 7; May 5, 12, & 19

OLLY (Our Lady of Lourdes Youth) Mime Stations of the Cross: Good Friday at Noon



First Communion Parents Meeting: March 31 from 12:15 – 1:30 pm
First Communion Rehearsal (with parents): May 12 at 9:45 am
First Communion Mass: May 18 at 11:00 am

Confirmation Retreat at Damascus: April 12 – 14.

Turn in Permission forms and retreat fees.

Confirmation Rehearsal (Parents, students, sponsors):

Sunday, May 19 at 12:15 pm

Confirmation Mass with Bishop Brennan:

Wednesday, May 22 at 7:00 pm

