

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt 18:18).

The Tradition of the Church has interpreted our Lord’s words above as having to do with Christ’s action in the remission of sins. As the *Catechism* teaches, “The words ‘bind’ and ‘loose’ mean: whomever you exclude from your communion, will be excluded from communion with God; whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will welcome back into his. *Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God*” (CCC, 1445).

Over time, the Church, aided by the Holy Spirit, laid down the ways of administering the sacrament of Penance. As Pope St. John Paul II writes: “The Church has always seen an essential link between the judgement entrusted to the priest in the Sacrament and the need for penitents to name their own sins, except where this is not possible. Since, therefore, the integral confession of serious sins is by divine decree a constitutive part of the Sacrament, it is in no way subject to the discretion of pastors (dispensation, interpretation, local customs, etc.)” (*Misericordia Dei*).

The Precepts of the Church – those minimum requirements for living a moral and liturgical Catholic Christian life – state that the faithful are to confess their sins through the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a year. Confessing one’s sin once a month, however, is desired, as doing so grants one: better self-knowledge, correction of bad habits, growth in humility, increased grace, and peace of conscience.

The sacrament of Confession is offered every day of the week except Sundays at Corpus Christi. On Mondays and Wednesdays, the sacrament is offered twice. This is to help us receive Holy Communion worthily (i.e., in the state of grace), and to experience the many benefits listed above.

“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19). Therefore, “be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20).

Father Frei