

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

“PREEMINENT”

God’s salvific will, which is the splendor of His glory, is carried out in a preeminent way in the sacramental ministry of Reconciliation.

“VIBRANT RENEWAL”

The potential for *an authentic and vibrant renewal of the whole Catholic Church* through the more faithful use of the sacrament of Penance is immeasurable...

THE SHIPWRECK OF SIN

The Fathers and theologians have rightly called the sacrament of Penance...*a second plank after shipwreck*,...second with respect to Baptism. Sin is the shipwreck from which Baptism and Penance save us.

“SPURRING THE FAITHFUL”

The sacrament of Penance contains in itself, precisely because it imparts or increases supernatural grace, the power of spurring the faithful to practice fervent charity, to perform the resulting good works and to accept devoutly the sorrows of life which also merit the remission of temporal punishment.

“THE GIFT OF PEACE”

By the very fact that it imparts or increases grace, the sacrament of Penance offers the gift of peace.

“HIGHER PEACE”

In the sacrament of Penance the faithful legitimately seek to begin that interior process which leads...to the progressive conformity of their own psychological state with that higher peace which consists in compliance with God’s will.

EXPECTED EFFECTS OF PENANCE

One of the effects of the sacrament of Penance that the faithful can rightly expect and desire is to mitigate the impulses of passion, to correct intellectual or emotional defects..., to refine all our free action, as a result of restored and growing supernatural charity.

MATURITY-INDICATOR

The state of the Sacrament of Penance in each parish and in each local Church is a good indicator of the authentic maturity of the faith of the priests and the people...

PARENTS

Parents, more by example than by words, should encourage their children to go to confession regularly. Parishes need to encourage families to do this.

“HE WILL HEAL YOU”

To those who have been far away from the Sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving love, I make this appeal: *Come back to this source of grace; do not be afraid!* Christ Himself is waiting for you. He will heal you, and you will be at peace with God!

(Sources: Message to Cardinal William Baum, dated March 20, 1998, and visit to San Antonio, Texas, September 13, 1987)

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