

**-Penance Service!!!!**

**A reminder to join us for our Penance Service this Tuesday night, April 5 at 6pm.  
We should have 6 priests available to hear your Confessions.**

***Imagine being caught in a most serious and embarrassing sin, then taken into a crowded public area and placed in front of a crowd to determine your fate. You stand there in shame before your accusers and judge.***

***You are lost, alone, and feel damned. And you know you are guilty of the sin of which you have been accused. The only unsettled matter is the exact form of your punishment. You only hope it isn't death.***

***We all have something in common with the woman caught in adultery in today's Gospel according to John: we are all sinners in desperate need of mercy and forgiveness. Lent is a Sacred time to remind us of this need for God's mercy and forgiveness. (Mr. Carl Olson)***

**The word "Caught" stands out to me in the story of Jesus and "The woman caught in adultery."**

**-We are all "caught" at times in sin.**

**-That is, the misuse of our freewill "in freedom," against our own good, the good of others, and/or against the Goodness of our Lord.**

**-How do we respond?**

**-We can ignore our sins, or we can seek to allow the struggle to bring us freedom and redemption by the forgiveness given to us by an amazing God.**

**Or how about the woman's perceived shame?**

**-Do not let shame allow us to ignore our sins, or pretend we have never offended our good and gracious God, because:**

**-if we become numb to dangerous (vices / habits) that enslave us, and we no longer feel shame or guilt, then we will not be open to a freeing forgiveness and healing that our loving Father wants to shower upon us. But on the other hand, while it is true that some sins bring shame, no sinner deserves the public disclosure of his or her sins or thoughts.**

***"Shaming enjoys a long history in our fallen world, and the way Jesus treats the woman caught in adultery displays the power of authentic Christian forgiveness. (Father Romanus)***

**In fact, Jesus' response reminds me of the Sacrament of Forgiveness that currently goes by the names of Penance, Reconciliation, or Confession. The Sacrament of Penance never occasions shaming, no matter the shameful of our sins.**

**On the contrary, the priest (In Persona Christi) announces that God does not condemn even the most shame-worthy sinner that comes to Him with a contrite heart seeking forgiveness.”**

**As an aside I offer you this council:**

**-Sometimes in Confession I hear: “Father, a grievous or traumatic past sin or action has been revealed to me after many years. Or this past sin keeps coming back to my conscience.”**

**1.If you have confessed this sin before, or in previous Confession used the words: “For these sins and all other sins I have committed,” then rest assured this sin has been forgiven, but “perhaps” is now being revealed for a “Needed Deeper Healing.”**

**2.And remember, if you have used the words in #1 above, then understand, that, with a contrite heart, God has forgiven you of this sin, but you HAVE NOT forgiven yourself. Forgiveness means a past harm or event committed does not keep us in the past. When we have forgiven a person or past sin (or event), by God’s Grace, we are able to move forward so that past action or harm does not hold us in the past. Perhaps God is saying I will help you to be healed from this, so it does not enslave and bind you to a hurtful past. My son, now move forward to a Future full of Hope, Healing, Forgiveness and life from death.**

**Blessings and Healing this Lent  
Father Vic**

**-Remember our Penance Service!!!!  
Join us for our Penance Service this Tuesday night, April 5 at 6pm.  
We should have 6 priests available to hear your Confessions.**