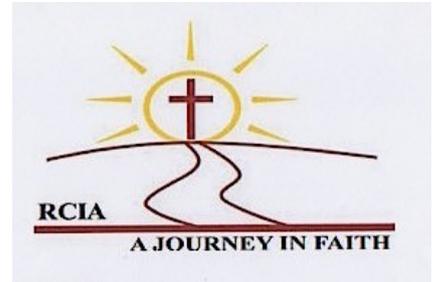


RCIA Newsletter - Keeping in touch.

Number 1.

26th March 2020



Dear Friends,

It was with a heavy heart that the RCIA sessions were cancelled for the foreseeable future. The priests and RCIA Team are conscious of not meeting up with you all on a weekly basis. There is a gap in our week!

Accordingly, the idea arose to have a weekly newsletter in which a summary of the planned talk would be printed - together with suggested Bible readings so we may continue - albeit individually - Lectio Divina.

In this way we can all try to continue our journey in faith.

Alas, there is no face to face discussion groups or opportunity to ask questions directly but the wonders of modern technology can assist us to some extent. Therefore, if you have any questions - about any topic, but in particular, about the subject of the week's talk - please feel free to email any questions to me on : madewaal@hotmail.com

You can also contact me on 01323 644 509.

I do not promise to be able to answer **all** questions but - hopefully - I know someone who can! Any answers will be included in future newsletters.

I hope you are all keeping well - and your distance!

God bless us all
John de Waal

Confession and Reconciliation - God's Loving Mercy.

“Confession is not isolated from mutual reconciliation and other acts of forgiveness in the Church - it is the climax of all such acts. If we ask why this sign was instituted, the answer is that the Sacraments give form and expression to all great realities of our life : birth, maturity, union of man and woman, vocation, repast and illness. Sin is another of these great realities and here too, the Lord has given a sign of His Presence. He is ready to meet us there with His redemptive powers.” (A New Catechism).

For the Christian, life is a pilgrimage, a spiritual journey from earth to heaven, and the seven Sacraments - Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Confession, Marriage, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Orders - sustain us as we make our way along this pilgrimage - enabling the 'great realities' - feeding us with the necessary energy, strength and purpose to keep close to the Way of Christ, and enabling us to continue in that Way no matter what we encounter.

Confession is the Sacrament that helps us confront the 'great reality' that we are not perfect and fall short of what God expects from us - those times we allow ourselves to be so easily moved away from what God wants from us and expects from us - reality for us all is that sin is attractive and calls us away from the Divine. Confession is when we face up to this reality and are prepared to admit that we need God in our lives, and also admit that on our own we cannot make this happen. Without God we are impotent to put things right.

In and through the Sacrament of Confession we seek the loving mercy which will bring us back into a full and complete loving relationship with the Father. We kneel in darkness before the priest, open our hearts, and afterwards stand in the full light of Christ.

This is not that easy. It is a difficult thing to do - because Confession means being brutally honest with ourselves. It can also be embarrassing but 'we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us' if we avoid this honesty.

The priest is not of himself so important - he is merely the go-between. It is the content of our Confession to God which is important - although for growth it is good to have a sympathetic relationship between penitent and confessor (priest) - who is also a sinner and understands our condition.

Confession requires us to be open to God, to our fellow human beings and to ourselves. Only through such openness and honesty to the 'great reality' that sin and sinfulness are part of our world can we grow as Christians.

John Kimberely

Suggested Bible Readings to understand Confession.

Institution of Confession

St John's Gospel, ch. 20 vv19 - 23.

Examination of conscience

Leviticus, ch.19 vv 1 - 2 and 11 - 18.

St Matthew's Gospel, ch. 25 vv 31 - 46.

St Luke's Gospel, ch. 15 vv 11 - 32.

St John's Gospel, ch. 14 vv 15 - 17.

Prayer

Grant we beseech Thee, Father most high,
that we, who behold the glory of Thy love in
the face of Jesus Christ, may consent
nevermore to sin against others, ourselves or
Thee; this we ask through the same Jesus, Our
Lord and Saviour. Amen

O merciful Lord, Jesus, forget not me as I have
forgotten Thee.

(Christina Rossetti).

Chopsticks - a parable for our time?

In Korea, there is a legend about a native warrior who died and went to heaven. "Before I enter," he said to the gatekeeper, "I would like you to take me on a tour of hell." The gatekeeper found a guide to take the warrior to hell. When they got there, the warrior was astonished to see a great table piled high with every tasty food he could imagine - anything one could possibly want to eat or drink. The warrior then looked at the people. They were all starving. "How could this be?" he asked the guide. "Are they not allowed to eat?" "Oh yes, they can eat," said the guide "but they must use the chopsticks they are given. They are five feet long and they must hold them at the end. Just look at them. They miss their mouths every time!" "Enough," said the warrior, "This is hell, indeed! Please take me back to heaven."

In heaven, to his surprise, he saw a similar room, with a similar table loaded with all the same food. But, the people were in radiant health, happy and well-nourished. The warrior turned to the guide and said, "I see - no chopsticks

here." The guide replied that yes, the people were still issued chopsticks and yes, they were still five feet long and that they still must be held at the end - but, the difference was that in heaven the people learned to feed each other.

