

*Twenty-Fifth Week of Ordinary Time*  
*September 22, 2024*  
*Year of the Most Holy Eucharist*  
*Reflection #39*

*“And when he saw them, he said unto them, ‘Go shew yourselves unto the priests.’ And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.” (Luke 17:14 KJV)*

For the past few weeks, we have reflected upon many topics in relation to the Eucharist. We first considered the importance of our union with God which began at our Baptism. We emphasized the necessity of grace, God’s free gift to us, which assists us in remaining strong in this union. We stressed how the Eucharist is the key in this relationship as it provides us sacramental grace, when we receive it in a worthy manner. Lastly, we thought of our own mortality and how we should daily remind ourselves of our impending death and the need to be found in union with God when that day does find us. After saying this, a thought occurred to me. I have been speaking to you of the importance of receiving the Eucharist in a worthy manner. To do this requires we be free of any mortal sin and, if we are aware of any unforgiven mortal sin in our soul, we **MUST** seek out the Sacrament of Reconciliation which restores our relationship, our union, with God.

I have often said that I was blessed growing up where I did in the state of Louisiana. I was surrounded by many good Catholic men and women who weekly, on Saturday nights, made time in their schedule to go to the church to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I have been amazed as to the number of Catholics who, questioning the need of this Sacrament, do not make Reconciliation/Confession a necessary part of their spiritual lives. I have often wondered if, God forbid, a priest may have unintentionally discouraged its frequency through some flippant remark. My dear family, I question if we do not realize, nor understand, the need for this Sacrament **IF we are planning to receive God in the Eucharist.** I chose to highlight this point in the written text to convey the Catholic fact that we **ARE** receiving God in the Eucharist; not a symbol of God, God Himself.

The necessity of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which precedes reception of the Eucharist, if we are in a state of mortal sin is not something the Catholic Church devised to shame any of us. Nor were its beginnings shaped on the belief that a nosey priest needed to know all of your and your family’s innermost secrets. Neither of these tall tales are anywhere close to a truthful statement. I would like to take a little time, in the coming weeks, to focus our attention upon this Sacrament of healing. Let us first begin by attempting to address **WHY** we go to Confession, more often than we imagine, and how moving into the confessional should be a natural flow from this starting point.

I begin with a question: “Have you ever shared with another person something that you are struggling with?” Why did you do that? I will offer you a possible answer. We do this because we **NEED** another to listen to us. We need to be heard; we need to be validated in our thoughts, feelings or beliefs. I think I can safely state we have all found ourselves in situations where people, those not necessarily holding our same beliefs concerning Confession, have opened up their hearts to us asking for guidance, assurance or a listening ear. Our providing the

“correct” answer was not always necessary. We, ourselves, have probably done the same with another. Herein lies a problem. The words uttered may not necessarily indicate a course change for the individual. A person may open themselves up only seeking affirmation from those of similar beliefs. Oddly, right now social media platforms are actively working to isolate your interests or likes and flood your pages with ideas and thoughts similar to your own. This can be quite scary when you consider its implications in our lives. Nevertheless, we run the risk of true isolation, true loneliness when we are surrounded only by those who agree with us and are no longer challenged to examine our thoughts, words and deeds. It is in this examination, when we honestly consider these things in our lives, that we find out one very important fact: I am not perfect. We are weak and therefore we **NEED** someone or something more powerful than ourselves to assist us, better yet, to heal us. We all stand in need of healing. We need a physician, a Divine Physician.