

## **Mass' Penitential Rite And Healing**

### **KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES**

You are all familiar with the story of the "Prodigal Son" in Luke's Gospel (ch.15). Having realized the wrong done to his father, and seeing himself reduced to living as a beggar, he repented and decided to return home.

He had convinced himself that it would have been better to be treated as a servant at home, than living away from home, feeding the pigs.

But the Father, who had been watching and waiting for his son, as soon as he saw him at a distance, ordered to prepare a great feast with a sumptuous banquet to celebrate the son's return.

Similarly, at Mass, our loving and merciful Father watches and waits for His children to return Home, to reconcile us to Himself, and to restore us back as His children, and calls us to celebrate at the Eucharistic banquet.

After the initial greeting, the Priest invites us to "acknowledge our sins, and so to prepare ourselves to CELEBRATE the SACRED MYSTERIES".

The "SACRED MYSTERIES" are the act of God coming into our midst at Mass: Jesus offers himself to the Father on the altar to pay for our transgressions, and makes himself food for our souls in the consecrated Bread and Wine.

The prodigal son confessed his sin to the father. The father joyfully forgave him, reconciled him to himself and celebrated with him.

Before we can celebrate with the Father, we also need first to examine ourselves, and to confess that we have "greatly sinned, in thoughts and in words, in what we have done and in what we have failed to do."

In faith and with the heart we ask "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy", and through the words of the absolution we receive the Father-God's healing embrace.

Now it's our turn to forgive also ourselves for being imperfect, and to forgive others as God has forgiven us in Christ. (Ephesians 4:32).

So, let us bring to mind those persons who have hurt us, and let us ask for the grace to extend to them the same HEALING EMBRACE of the Father that we have received.

Let us remember that forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling.

FORGIVENESS opens the door to HEALING, whether emotional, spiritual or physical, as well as healing of relationships: parents-children, spouses, in-laws, brothers-sisters, etc.

As you can see, the PENITENTIAL RITE is the KEY TO HEALING THROUGH THE MASS.