

Wisdom from our parish Lenten book read:

***Freedom and Forgiveness:
A Fresh Look at the Sacrament of Reconciliation***
by Fr. Paul Farren, Paraclete Press

... [T]he sacrament of Reconciliation is primarily that sacred place and moment when God confesses... God confesses his love, his forgiveness, his gratitude, his confidence, his trust and his belief in us. It is God's confession that enables us to confess.

***Do I trust God's confidence in me?
An examination of conscience***

- First read the story of the rich young man: Mark 10:17-22

The rich young man knelt before Jesus.

- Do I acknowledge Jesus in my life? Do I have space for God?
- Do I seek, respect and respond to his Word?

The rich young man wanted to inherit eternal life.

- Do I want to be close to Jesus always?
- Do I want to do the best I can with the gift of my life? Do I believe that I can accept the gift of heaven by the way I live on earth?

Jesus asked the rich young man if he kept the Ten Commandments.

- Do I keep the Ten Commandments?
- Do I realize that rather than stopping me doing things they free me to be myself?
- Do I respect myself as the beautiful creation that God made me?

Jesus looked steadily at the rich young man and loved him.

- Do I believe that Jesus looks at me and loves me?
- Do I believe that Jesus invites me to share in his life?
- Do I believe that Jesus believes in me?

Jesus told the rich young man to sell everything he had and give the money to the poor.

- Do I make space for Jesus in my life through loving and caring for others, especially my family?
- Do I recognize the face of Jesus in those who are marginalized, disrespected, those who live in poverty and those who are vulnerable?
- Do I recognize everybody in the world as my sister or brother equal in the eyes of God?

Jesus then told the rich young man to follow him.

- Do I believe that Jesus has a plan for my life? Do I make an effort to discover that plan? Do I trust Jesus enough to accept his plan?

The rich young man went away sad.

- Do I choose the way of Jesus or do my own thing?
- Do I accept that sin brings sadness?
- Do I accept that true happiness can only be found in Jesus?
- In other words, do I allow God to be God in my life and do I welcome Jesus into my life?

*...[T]he sacrament of Reconciliation is a celebration of our liberation.
In the sacrament we are liberated from the fear of who we are
and so we are free to love and empower others.*