



4th Sunday of Lent

2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23
Ps 137:1-6
Ephesians 2:4-10
John 3:14-21

Monday March 23
Isaiah 65:17-21
Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
John 4:43-54

Tuesday March 24
Ezek 47:1-9, 12
Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
John 5:1-3, 5-16

Wednesday March 25
The Annunciation
Isaiah 7:10-14
Ps 40:7-11
Heb 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Thursday March 26
Exodus 32:7-14
Ps 106:19-23
John 5:31-47

Friday March 27
Wisdom 2:1, 12-22
Ps 34:17-21, 23
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday March 28
Jeremiah 11:18-20
Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-12
John 7:40-53

Why do we prefer to conceal our sins rather than face them and go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and speak out loud what we've done wrong?

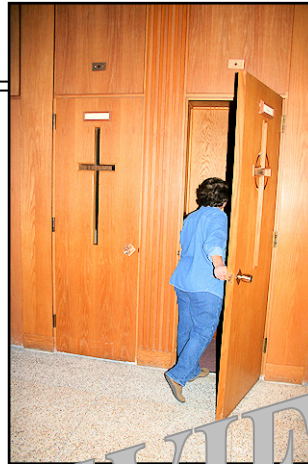
Jesus comes to us in the confessional, appearing to us in the form of a priest who warns of secrecy. In the Gospel reading, Jesus assures us that he did not come to condemn us. It is safe to come into the light where our sins are exposed.

However, we don't want to go to Confession if guilt is driving us into the darkness of low self esteem, the fear of being unlovable, and an inability to forgive ourselves.

Guilt is a good motivator for repentance and change, but when combined with the messages of a poor self image, we feel undeserving of forgiveness. We feel shame. And shame makes us even

more afraid to expose the truth about our sins.

However, the very thing we fear is what will become our joy and healing if we dare to face the work of letting Jesus heal our low self esteem. Perhaps your starting point needs to be a counselor or therapist, or a spiritual director, or the priest in the confessional. Whatever will help you get into the confessional, this is where your healing lies. Jesus completes the healing by curing your spirit with forgiveness, mercy, and un-



conditional love through the words of absolution that he speaks to you through the priest.

In today's Gospel, Jesus points out that whoever lives the truth (whoever is honest about themselves) "comes to the light" to be rescued. When we admit anything we've done wrong, speaking it out loud to the ears of one of Christ's servants, we are rescued by Jesus. We hear Jesus minister to us through the vocal chords of the priest, and we receive from Jesus the power to resist the same sins in the future.

Why suffer any longer, hiding in the darkness of fear and a poor self image? Jesus has come to rescue you!

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What do you feel ashamed about? Have you taken this to the Sacrament of Reconciliation yet? If yes, remember that since God has forgiven you and the Church has forgiven you, they do not condemn you, so why are you condemning yourself?
2. How are we set free to live in joy and peace by admitting our sins and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
3. Describe a time when you lived in darkness; how did Jesus bring you into the light?
4. How have you experienced special graces from going to Confession?