

SOLT Lay Formation Teaching Transcript

IMITATE MARY BECOME LIKE JESUS LIVE FOR THE TRIUNE GOD

THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

Welcome & Blessing

God Bless you! May Our Lady, Saint Joseph and the Holy Angels and Saints smile upon you. Welcome again to the Lay Formation Program of the Society of Our Lady of The Most Holy Trinity. My name is Father Zachary of the Mother of God, the Priest Director of Formation. Today, it is our joy to find that God has created us for holiness. The subject of today's talk will be the Universal Call to Holiness. We begin with prayer.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, pray for us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Our Father

The Our Father prayer contains all the petitions we need to live a holy way of life. When you pray the Our Father prayer slowly with the heart of Our Blessed Mother Mary, living as children of our Father, trusting Him, you find that He wants His name to be Holy in us. We are His children and He has given us His family name. God is Holy. Our prayer does not make Him Holy, He already is Holy. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we proclaim: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.* And blessed are we who come in the name of the Lord, His holy name. Holiness is for everybody. As we pray the Our Father prayer, we trust God. We seek to do His will. He gives us the grace to have His kingdom come as He gives you His daily bread, the Eucharist. And He asks us to be forgiving people, to overcome temptation and to leave evil. Holiness is contained in the Our Father prayer. Holiness is in our relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are called. Sacred Scripture tells us to be Holy as God is holy. That's what holiness is, living as God lives. That is His gift to us, we bear His name.

Love God for Himself Above All Things

The essence of being holy is to love God for Himself above all things and to do His will. We see the summit of holiness on the Cross. Here I hold a crucifix; inside this crucifix is a piece of the true cross of

Jesus Christ, where Jesus laid down his life, witnessing to us holiness: He is God and He witnesses His love for God the Father in the Holy Spirit. Jesus loves God for Himself above all things. Jesus is God and in His love for us He assumes our human nature and shows us the path to holiness. Holiness is to love God above all things for Himself and to do His will. ***His will is that we go to the cross.*** Now it is going to take formation to come to the cross. Our weak human nature sometimes runs from the cross; however, Our Lady will be there for us on the way of the cross.

We see in the Stations of the Cross Our Lady is there at the foot of the cross and she will be at the foot of the cross with us. She will teach us to go to our destiny, to go to the cross. Jesus says deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me. This is the call to holiness and all are called to holiness.

To Do His Will

It is not just for the Priest, it is not just for the Sisters, it is for you, and it is for ***all***. Some people may say, "I have never heard of such a thing. Father, I thought holiness was just for the few, the chosen." The reality is that you are chosen and you are called. That is why you are here in this Lay Formation Program. You did not bring yourself here. God brought you here. Our Lady brought you here. Our Mother wants you to know that you are called to be holy and holiness and happiness are the same reality. We have talked about holiness and happiness and heaven. Those three H's we keep connected. You are called to be holy, by virtue of your baptism. Being baptized into Christ means you are to live the life of Christ. Living the life of Christ means that you will be holy. Our Lady will teach you how to live the life of Christ, to radiate the Trinitarian life of Christ to others. You received this Trinitarian life in your Baptism. You received the life of the Father the Son and Holy Spirit in your Baptism. In Baptism there is the Trinitarian form where the priest or deacon pours water over the child's head and says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In Baptism you receive the Trinitarian life. You become the child of the father, the son or the daughter of the father. In Baptism you become a disciple of Christ. In fact, you are baptized into the light of Christ, in whom we live and move and have our being. We no longer live for ourselves, we live a holy life. We belong to God, we love God above all things for Himself and we seek to do His holy will. Our Lady teaches us to live this life of Christ.

Baptism

In Baptism you become a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in you. That is amazing to relate to Him: He is a divine person who lives in you. If you want to be holy, relate to the Holy Spirit. It is right in His name, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, He is *holy*. Do you want to be holy? Relate to the Holy Spirit. We know in the Annunciation, the First Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary, the angel Gabriel appeared to Our Blessed Mother, announcing the plan of God. The Divine Plan is that the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, is going to assume our human nature - impossible for man but everything is possible for God. Our Lady says "yes" to this plan, "yes" to the will of God. Our Lady lives a holy life. She says "yes" to the plan of God and the Holy Spirit comes upon her and the word becomes flesh and dwells among us. Our Lady invokes the Holy Spirit to come upon you and the Holy Spirit will guide your life. He dwells in you, the baptized.

Build this relationship spend five minutes a day with the Holy Spirit. How much time do most people waste each and every day? Spend five minutes with the Holy Spirit relating to Him as a real person within you to become Holy, to know who you are, to live your Baptism. Holy Mother Church proclaims that all are called to holiness, according to their state in life and their particular paths.

Rule of Life

During the facilitations of this section of Our Lady's life in relationship to God the Father, we will help you develop a rule of life, a way of life. In Our Lady's Society, we all have a rule of life. In the Formation Program we will start simply. We will help you develop a simple way of life. Remember when we were talking about prayer, you get up in the morning, you make a morning offering, after you recite the two greatest commandments: You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, might and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself for the love of God. You make this morning offering and there are other morning prayers. We will be providing you a prayer guide in the handbook and we will provide you other tools that aid you in this journey to holiness.

Holiness is pure because it is relational. Our Lady's Society is all about relationships. So, as you go through your day we will help you develop a rule of life where you stay in a relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Divine Persons who came to dwell in you in your Baptism. We want to stay in the presence of God, to practice the presence of God, to pray the Holy Rosary, to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to pray in Eucharistic Adoration and to do an examination of conscience. God has a plan for your life. We talked about that. Prayer will help you find that plan to respond to that plan to say "yes" to God's will.

You know that you are created in the image and likeness of God. We talked about that last month. Now it is time to go forward. The first section of the program was based on how Our Lady was seen by God in His mind's eye, in His heart, before creation and how you and I were seen in God's mind's eye, in His heart, before creation. Now we move to the Immaculate Conception. At the right time Our Lady was immaculately conceived, because she was going to be the Mother of God; that was God's plan for her life. We talked about the Annunciation where she said "yes" to this plan. God has a plan for your life. Our Lady was immaculately conceived which means she was conceived without sin. She was redeemed; she was redeemed in a special way by what we call prevenient Grace. God took the graces of Jesus' death on the Cross, took them out of time and applied them before Jesus came to Mary because she had a special role. It is not right that the enemy, the devil, should have any dominion over her or her womb because God was going to reside in her womb. So she was redeemed in a special way because God had a special plan for her life. God has a plan, He carries out His plan. Our Lady shows us how to say "yes" to His plan. Now we see how our lives parallel the life of our Blessed Mother because we too were redeemed in Baptism. We were not redeemed the way our Blessed Mother was redeemed with the prevenient grace because we are not asked to be the Mother of God. But we are asked to be faithful, that's holiness.

God Wants You to Be a Saint

God's plan for you is to be a Saint. As you participate in this program, this reality will be held before you over and over and over again, because you are created to be a Saint. Become the Saint you were created to be, claim this. This is a Holy desire. It is not proud to try and become a Saint; the enemy will try to whisper in your ear and say, "Oh that's pride," because he is terrified of the Saints. But you are created to be a Saint, this is God's plan that you are responding to. That is a holy desire to be a Saint and this is why you are baptized to live the life of Christ, the Holy One of God.

Living Your Baptism

In Baptism your parents and God-parents said for you that you wanted to live the life of Christ, you no longer wanted to live for yourself. You wanted to live the beautiful life of Christ and so you died when you went under the water and you rose in Christ when you came above the water. Do you know who

you are? A child of God! Before your Baptism there was a profession of faith. We went through the Apostles Creed when we talked about the Holy Rosary. The Apostles Creed lists twelve foundational articles of our faith. You believe those articles, you believe those truths, you live those truths and they guide your life; that is part of being holy. In Baptism we now live in Christ, we live His life and that is the essence of holiness.

Trinitarian-Marian Spirituality

Christ's life is Trinitarian and Marian. That is why in Our Lady's society we have Trinitarian-Marian spirituality. Christ's life is centered in the Trinity, because He is the second person in the Trinity. Christ's life is about communion, the communion of the Trinity. This is holiness. Christ had a Marian aspect of His life because He loves His mother. What is interesting, there are some that want to wrestle or argue about the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary and it all comes down to this- she is loved by Jesus, she is loved by the Father, she is loved by the Holy Spirit. We are to love her. All she wants is for you to live your Baptism in Christ. She is the Mother of Christ and a mother always loves to bring forth her child. With a Father's heart, God in His goodness gives us a mother to help us live a holy way of life. In Our Lady's community, our spirituality is to imitate Mary, become like Jesus, live for the Triune God. This is holiness! It is about living our Baptism. In fact, when you look at the spiritual truth of our life you find that we are to live the life of God himself. God gives us this life in our Baptism.

All of the theology of John Paul the Great, beloved of God, our Holy Father who lived a Saintly and holy life, was all about calling people back to their Baptism. If you are living your Baptism, you are living a holy way of life. But most people do not know how to live their Baptism because they think that Baptism is just about washing away original sin. Certainly, that takes place. Certainly it is a great gift from God, His gift of redemption won for us on the cross. In Baptism Original sin is washed away, but we know we have the consequence of original sin within us, our fallen human nature.

In Baptism we become Disciples, Temples & Members of the Family of the Church

Let us look at the positive side of the ledger as well. In Baptism we became children of the Father, disciples of Jesus; we became temples of His Holy Spirit; we became members of the Church. We were given our Blessed Mother as our mother. We were anointed as priest, prophet and king- priest in the common priesthood of all the faithful. Whereas all the baptized share in the common priesthood, ordained priests belong to the Ministerial Priesthood in Holy Orders. Later on in this Formation Program we will go through the beauty of the sacramental economy of the Church. How the life of Christ is given to us to strengthen us to live our Baptism.

Sacrifice

All of us are to offer sacrifice, like a priest, in the common priesthood in our Baptism. We are to be prophets and proclaim the Truth that sets people free as we proclaim Jesus Christ who is the Truth. We live in a world where people try to make the truth relative to themselves. We call it relativism. It is straight from hell. Truth is not relative to any human person. Truth is Jesus Christ, who says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." The Truth is the same yesterday today and forever. That is why the Church is not blown around by the winds of political correctness. That is not what the Church is about.

Give People to Jesus by Giving Them to Our Lady

The Church is here to proclaim Jesus Christ and to give Jesus Christ, and that is what you are to do in your Baptism. Because you received Jesus Christ, you are to give Jesus Christ and that is a holy way of life. That is what I do as a priest. I basically do Our Father's will. I love God above all things for Himself. Our Lady has taught me how to do that, and then I do His will. As the Father sends me people to serve as a Priest in Jesus Christ, I ask the Father to help me fulfill His plan for this person and the Father says, "Give them Jesus my Son." I say, "Yes, I will give them Jesus." He sends me another person and I ask Him to help me fulfill His plan for this person and He says, "Give them Jesus, my Son." He sends me another person and I say, "Father, help me fulfill Your plan for this person" and He says, "Give them Jesus Christ, my Son." Finally I started to catch on. My whole life is giving people Jesus. I find the best way to give people Jesus is by giving them Our Blessed Mother because Mary, Our Mother, knows Jesus so intimately, better than any human person. You know how a mother knows her child and you know how a child is supposed to love their mother? Jesus loves His Mother.

Honor Your Father & Mother

Jesus gave us the Fourth Commandment: Honor your father and mother. Children out there I am asking you to live that commandment so you will live to an old age, a beautiful old age. There is peace in families when we honor our father and mother. Jesus gave us that Commandment and He also tells us, "Keep my Commandments." Jesus keeps the Commandments, He loves his Mother.

When people wrestle with the role of Our Lady, all I can say is, "If she is good enough for Jesus, she is good enough for me." She is good enough for you and she is so beautiful. She will help you live the life of Jesus. She is the sure, short, secure, perfect, easy way to live the life of Jesus. We will talk about that in Total Consecration, the conclusion of this first year of Lay Formation. Consecrating yourself to Jesus in Mary is a beautiful path of holiness. Our Lady takes you by the hand and she teaches you how to live your Baptism, how to love God for Himself above all things, and to do His holy will. That is holiness!

Our Lady & Her Holiness

Mary in her relationship with God is your gift and model to come to a greater holiness in loving God for Himself and being faithful to His will and in the perfection of the Father by seeing His goodness in everything and everyone.

You are to direct all your desires and faculties as well as your words, thoughts and actions to imitate Our Lady in what is pleasing to God. That is holiness and that is happiness and that is the path to heaven.

Our Lady will help you to resist the concupiscence of the eyes. That is a big word. Concupiscence is one of the consequences of original sin so we still have this concupiscence. It is a big word which means in some ways we are disordered. For example, we let our eyes go to things that they shouldn't see. Our eyes should be fixed on God and on holy things, things that are pleasing to God. Our Lady will teach us how to overcome the disordered movements of the flesh and the pride of life offered by the world and the devil. **You see there are three enemies to the soul the devil, the flesh and the world. We must overcome them.** Saint John tells us that we have to overcome the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. **Greed, vanity, lust, and pride all need to be overcome.** Who will teach us how to keep our eyes fixed on God? Who will teach us how to love God above all things? Who will teach us that we were created for eternal glory, eternal life and eternal happiness?

Who? Our Blessed Mother will teach us how to live our Baptism. That's Holiness! So you move from an interior knowledge in light of these realities in your life. You let your works in your life flow from the goodness of your Heavenly Father. You ask for the grace to do God's holy will always as our Lady did. This is holiness!

The Church has called us all to holiness. There is a universal call to holiness in *Lumen Gentium*, one of the four constitutions of the sixteen documents of Vatican II. During this Lay Formation Program we will begin to enter into the documents of Vatican II, a great powerful movement of the Holy Spirit. The Second Vatican Council had been misunderstood, at least initially. Fortunately we have been given two of the Council Fathers to guide us as our Holy Father to a fuller understanding of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. John Paul the Great and Pope Benedict XVI speak the truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit at the Council and bring the truth of the Holy Spirit in an ever new way to our world. An essential part of the truth proclaimed at the Council is that all people are called to holiness. The universal call to holiness is articulated most specifically in *Lumen Gentium*, section 5. *Lumen Gentium* takes its name from the first words of the document which, in English, begins "Christ is the Light of nations." Receive this light and live the life of holiness.

John Paul the Great gave us a document at the end of the Jubilee Year, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium.) It is the plan for the third Christian Millennium. Throughout this document the call to holiness is presented as the plan for the third Christian millennium. Everyone is called to holiness and we do this by contemplating the face of Christ in the school of Mary. As we contemplate the face of Christ in the school of Mary and become transformed in holiness into Christ, we may then put out into the deep for a great catch, the transformation of our culture and the world. This follows the teaching of Vatican II. Further proclaiming the truth of Vatican II and our call to holiness, John Paul the Great issued *Christifideles Laici, To the Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*, in which he reaffirms Vatican II's call to holiness and for all people to live their Baptism.

Communion

Now the basic spirituality in Our Lady's Society is the fundamental spirituality of all the Saints, union with God. It is communion built on humble obedience to His will. It is a union of love received by total abandonment to the Lord united perfectly with God. The Saint becomes a channel of Divine Love to flow freely to others. His or her life becomes the fulfillment of the great commandments: love God and love your neighbor. This is what holiness is all about. In your Baptism you became united with God and you are to live that Baptism.

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, but by adoption in our Baptism we are Children of God, we are His kin. These bonds of kinship in covenants are the covenants of communion to the Most Holy Trinity. The New and Everlasting Covenant established in Jesus' Blood. These bonds are unbreakable except by one thing, the misuse of our free will. If we misuse our free will and the sin is mortal, we separate ourselves from God.

Mortal Sin

For there to be mortal sin there are three requirements:

- 1) There has to be serious matter.
- 2) There has to be knowledge that it is serious. There are certain sins that are intrinsically evil such as abortion and homosexual activity. [Let me make clear we love the homosexual, yet we do not condone homosexual activity. The Church is here to help people carry their cross.] There are certain sins that are intrinsically evil; they go against the natural law. The natural law is nothing other than the

light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we know what we must do and what we must avoid. God has given this light or law at the creation.” Because knowledge of these intrinsically evil acts is rooted in the natural law which “is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man,” one cannot say he or she does not have knowledge of the evil.

3) Deliberate consent. If you enter into mortal sin you separate yourself from God and you are no longer living your Baptism. So what do you do? You come to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation is essential to living the call to holiness. Many people have lost sight of the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation, the great gift that it is. It is the call back to Baptism and it was given to the Church on the evening of the Resurrection. In the Resurrection is where Jesus won this new life for us that we received in Baptism. But Jesus knew that some of us would not stay faithful to our Baptism. So what did he do? He established the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation.

To have peace in your life and to be reconciled; is to be reconciled in your relationships with God, yourself and with others. Come to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. If you want peace and reconciliation you have to come to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. Many people call it Confession and confession of our sins is involved but “confession” places the emphasis on what we do when it is what God does that deserves the emphasis. The essential part of the sacrament is an encounter with the mercy of God, His love and forgiveness that calls us to contrition, transformation and communion with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God established this Sacrament to call you back home.

You Can Always Come Back to God

Like the Prodigal Son, no matter what you have done; you can come to God. He is waiting for you just like the account of the Prodigal Son. The father was there looking for his son to come back. In fact, some call the parable of the prodigal son the parable of the prodigal father. It really isn't a parable so much as, it is an account of the way God is. He is the prodigal father. He is always waiting for us, He loves us, He is our Daddy, our Abba, Our Father. What father's heart is not moved for his child, no matter what this child has done? He also wants his child not to hurt himself anymore. Come to your Father, He is waiting for you. When we call it Confession we are starting with ourselves. That is presumptuous because in reality your Father is drawing you to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation, known also as the Sacrament of Penance. He draws you so you can receive peace and reconciliation and live your Baptism again. You can receive absolution and start afresh. We pray you sin no more, but know that God loves you and He has established this Sacrament so you can live a holy way of life.

Reconciliation-John 20

I want to read from Saint John's Gospel Chapter 20 where Jesus establishes this Sacrament. It is a Resurrection Sacrament. I reach for the Holy Scriptures as well as the purple stole that the priest wears as he administers the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation in Christ. There is only one Priest, Jesus Christ, the eternal high priest. **Every ordained priest shares in His priesthood but there is only one priest and it is Jesus who forgives sin. Only God forgives sins, the priest is an instrument. The priest sits in persona Christ, in the person of Christ, in the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation.**

On this stole, which represents the authority of Christ, you see the image of Divine Mercy. Red and white rays flow from the heart of Christ. This represents the Sacrament of the Eucharist that is the blood that flows from the side of Christ. The white rays represent the waters of Baptism, and Peace and Reconciliation. This talk deals with the connection between the Sacraments of Baptism and Peace and Reconciliation. The living waters of both flow from the heart of Christ. God's mercy is waiting for you. No matter what you have done, it is only a drop in the ocean of God's infinite mercy, trust in Him and come to Him. That is why the image says "Jesus I Trust in You." This stole was blessed by Pope Benedict XVI and it is an honor to wear it. The priest puts on the stole as he kisses it knowing that he represents Jesus Christ in the Sacrament. The priest knows that you were saved by Jesus' love on the cross.

The Sacrament was established on the evening of the Resurrection. Turn to John's Gospel, Chapter 20: 19. "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews; Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when He said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any they are retained." The Gospel of the Lord! We kiss the Sacred Word of Jesus who is the Living Word.

Now in this Gospel passage you see the Seven Aspects of the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. Most people think it is just about confessing your sins, "I'll confess my sins, receive absolution, do my penance and walk away." The Sacrament is far richer than that. We need to have sorrow, contrition for our sins, and the intention to amend our lives and sin no more. We humble ourselves and we confess all of our sins integrally. That is required for a valid confession. We must confess type and number of any serious sins for a valid confession. Here are the seven aspects of this Sacrament the way Jesus established it.

First, He comes through the closed doors which were locked for fear. That is how it is for many people coming to the Sacrament, fearful. Jesus comes right through those doors and he says, "Peace be with you." The Sacrament is called Peace and Reconciliation. Jesus says, "Peace, I give you, my peace I leave you." Peace is His gift to you and He is the King of Peace. Peace is His gift to us. We need peace. The very first thing you should receive when you go into the Sacrament is peace. Jesus gifts you with His peace.

Second, Jesus shows you His hand and His side and you see Jesus in the priest. Don't say it is Father Joseph or Father Peter because it is Christ who forgives your sins. It is Jesus Christ. You recognize Him and His love for you.

In the third part of the Sacrament, you rejoice when you recognize Jesus. **You rejoice!**

The fourth part of the Sacrament is Jesus giving you peace again. He says, "Peace be with you." Why does He say a second time, "Peace be with you?" The reason Jesus confers His peace a second time is because, peace is so important and we tend to give up our peace so easily.

This Sacrament is about coming into a relationship with Jesus that gives you peace. We rejoice when we recognize Christ in the priest. We rejoice because Jesus is there wishing to share His saving act of love, His Divine Mercy, with us. In the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation it is all about mercy. If we come there with a humble and contrite heart, it is all about mercy. I can share that as a priest from the

pulpit I preach as a Lion, the Lion of the generation of Judah. But in the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Penance, it is all about mercy. The priest goes there as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. God desires to bestow mercy upon you. We rejoice and He says peace be with you again. Why? Everything Jesus does has a purpose and a meaning. That is how we should live our life. Jesus says peace be with you again because we tend to give away our peace much too easily.

If somebody looks at us the wrong way, we give away our peace. If somebody does not look at us, we give away our peace. If somebody says something to us, we give away our peace. If somebody doesn't say something to us, we give away our peace. We are very interesting little creatures, beloved by God. You see peace is one of the greatest gifts God can give you. Jesus is the King of Peace. Peace is more valuable than a gold bar. If somebody looked at you the wrong way and you had a gold bar would you say, "Here take my gold bar, just do not look at me the wrong way." Or, if they did not look at you would you say, "Here, is a gold bar, please look at me." If they say something to you or they do not say something to you, would you give them a gold bar? Most people I know would not. We give away our peace for things less than peace. **I want you to remember this: do not give away your peace for anything less than peace.** Peace is valuable and Jesus desires to bestow peace upon us through the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. The first four parts of this sacrament are an encounter with Jesus Christ. You encounter Jesus present in the Sacrament.

The fifth part of the Sacrament is an encounter with God the Father. Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Do you see yourself as a sent person? You are. Remember, God had you in His mind and His heart before you were even created. He has a plan for your life. He sent you into this world. You are not of the world, you belong to God. You are a sent person. You need to come to see yourself as a sent person. Our Blessed Mother knew she was a sent person. Wherever you are sent, you are free. Why are you here? Because you're sent, that frees you. The Father has a plan for your life to continue to make love visible, to continue the mission of Christ. You are to live your Baptism, remember we were talking about Baptism.

The Problem With Sin

The problem with sin is that we are not living our Baptism. When we do not see ourselves as a sent person we lose sight of God's plan in our life. And sometimes we do things below our dignity; but Jesus is waiting for us, the Father is waiting for us, the Holy Spirit is waiting for us. The Father talks to you through the priest about His plan for you. You see basically sin is when you do not do the will of God. The will of God is His plan of love for you. The Father wants you to live your Baptism to live the life of Christ. When you sin you are not living your Baptism and you are not living the life of Christ.

So, the Father wants to talk to you as a father. Every priest has the Father's heart; we want to talk to you as a father. We are listening to the Holy Spirit in us as the Father speaks words of love to you. He tells you as His child how to live the plan He has for you. He tells you how to live a life of holiness, how to live your Baptism. You see the guidance you receive in the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation is the help you need to live the plan of God in your life to be happy, to be holy and to reach heaven. That is what the whole plan is about. That is what the Sacrament is about. You encounter God the Father in the Sacrament because when you see Jesus, you see the Father. That is what Jesus says, "When you see me, you see the Father." The Father speaks to you. Do you want the Father to speak to you? Go to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation, He will give you guidance. He loves you.

Remember, this first year of formation is about coming into a deeper relationship with God the Father. Our Lady teaches us how to listen to our Father, how to respond to our Father's plan of love and how to see yourself as a sent person.

God Gives Us the Holy Spirit

The sixth part of the Sacrament is the reception of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" as He breathes on you.

Because God has sent you, God is going to give you what you need to fulfill what you are sent to do. It would not be fair to send you to do something without giving you what you need. So, He gives you the Holy Spirit. He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This is the Holy Spirit that you received in your Baptism. But, if mortal sin enters our life, then we separate ourselves from God. But God is always calling us back to communion. In this plan of communion we are going to live out our baptism.

He gives you the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides your life. He is the soul of your soul. *"Come Holy Spirit come, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary your well beloved Spouse."* That is a great prayer, pray it regularly. You can also say, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." Listen to the Holy Spirit. He comes as the dove, gentle and peaceful. He wants to guide your life. Don't have him fly away. Respond to His inspiration. Respond to His call, now, to come to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. Everyone involved in this Lay Formation Program, I urge you to go to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation in the next month. Go today. *"Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts."* Come be reconciled, receive peace. Parents, if there are disturbances in your family and you do not know what the cause of these disturbances is, have your children go to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. You'll notice there is peace in your family when they go to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. What a remedy, a divine remedy to bring peace to your family!

If you learn nothing else from this Lay Formation Program but to come to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation once a month (which is the remedy for the West according to Our Blessed Mother), if that is all you learn, and you do that regularly for the rest of your life, you will be blessed indeed. Now, we pray and trust that you will receive many more gifts in this Lay Formation Program. God is generous. God is good. God bestows the fullness of Himself on us. We need to call people back to communion with God. We need to call people back to the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation.

The seventh part of the Sacrament is where your sins are forgiven. Jesus says, "Give me all your sins, your acts, your omissions, your negligence, your failures, your everything. Give it to me." **If there is mortal sin, it must be confessed.** We come in and we confess them by type and number. You do not need to get into the particulars of names, specific description of acts. However, you need to identify the sin by type and number.

There is a big difference between, God willing nobody does this, but murdering one person or being a serial killer. You want to give it all to God, He is there waiting to give you mercy. However, if you hold back sins, which is a sin itself, then you won't heal. Some people say, "God already knows" and He does, but, He wants you to acknowledge, humbly and with contrition, your sins. You cast them on God because He cares for you. He is big enough, He can absorb it. Give them to the ocean of His Divine Mercy. Even if you took all of the sins of Hitler and Stalin and all of the tyrants of all of history and

compared all this evil to God's Mercy, it would not equal one drop in comparison to the ocean of God's Mercy.

If only you would accept His mercy. If only you would enter into the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the just Heart of Joseph and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He is waiting for you. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, is waiting for you.

I ask you to examine what is your attitude towards the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. Do you truly understand it? Do you sincerely want to be set free from sin and to turn again to God to begin a new life and to live your baptism entering into deep friendship with God? I pray that you do. That is what the Sacrament is all about. I urge you to come regularly, I go every week. The Holy Father, John Paul the Great, went everyday and I can assure you it is not because he sinned more than us. He said himself because he had to be a minister of mercy and forgiveness he needed to receive mercy and forgiveness. You can't give what you do not have.

Five steps to a good confession

Now there are five steps to a good confession, the beautiful Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation. Before even beginning these steps you pray to God the Holy Spirit for His light and His Grace.

- 1) You make an examination of conscience. We will provide you a good examination of conscience. The Ten Commandments are a good examination of conscience as are the beatitudes. Go through the beatitudes and pray on whether you're living them. Ask whether you please God in every thought word and action. Do you love as Jesus has instructed us to love? Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There are many good examinations of conscience out there. You should do that as part of our rule of life.
- 2) Be sorry for your sins and try to have the perfect sorrow of love that is what is called perfect contrition. Even with imperfect contrition, the Sacrament is valid. Yet, we want perfect contrition recognizing that Jesus becomes so small in the Eucharist for us and we hurt Him. We hurt him who loves perfectly. Say, "I am sorry, Lord. You have come all the way from heaven and have died on the cross for me; rose and gave me this life and I have been unfaithful to my baptism. I am sorry, Lord. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner."
- 3) Make a firm resolution not to sin again and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Ask for that Grace through Our Lady.
- 4) Tell all your sins in the confessional and receive absolution hide nothing and give it all to God. Remember, serious sins must be confessed by type and number. Clear all the channels of Grace.
- 5) Say your penance promptly.

Today, modern society has lost the sense of sin. As a Catholic follower of Christ I must make an effort to recognize sin in my daily actions, words, and omissions.

I also recognize my call to virtue, my call to holiness, which is what this is all about. The next teaching will be on virtue. The Gospel shows how important it is to have forgiveness for our sins. The life of the Saints proves that the person who grows in holiness has a stronger sense of sin, sorrow for sins and a

need of the Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation, of the Sacrament of Penance. Become a Saint. That is what you are created for. This is your call; the vocation to holiness- the universal call to holiness.

The three most important points to this talk:

- 1) You are called to be a Saint. That is what you are created for.
- 2) Saints live their Baptism in the fullness that is living the life of Christ. Our Blessed Mother will help you live this life of Christ. You are called to live your Baptism, to live the Trinitarian life of God.
- 3) The Sacrament of Peace and Reconciliation restores you to your Baptism, so you can become the Saint you were created to be. To receive grace come regularly, come at least once a month. I urge you to go once every two weeks if not more frequently.

Challenges of this month

- Open your mind and your heart asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit shows you that you are called to be a saint. You can know what it means to live your baptism, you can know that God's mercy awaits you and you can respond to this invitation to live the life of God.
- Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation this month. Feel the peace; feel the reconciliation; receive it and live it. The fruit and the grace is peace, the fruit and the grace of this month's teaching is peace. Do you want peace? Do you want reconciliation? I know you do. I know you do. I do. I see you the way that I see myself.
- I am to love my neighbor as I love myself for the love of God. That is the Second greatest Commandment. And I love you. I love you so much and, therefore, I want to share with you the truth as a father to draw you to God's mercy. I will be praying for you this month that you will respond to this great gift. That you will know who you are. God loves you. Receive His mercy, turn to Our Lady and ask her to help you. Our Mother is waiting for you, call out her name: "Mary, Mary, Mary, my Mother help me to live my life as a child of God and help me live my baptism. Guide me by the hand to do what I need to do to become the Saint I was created to be". As always, we end with a blessing. The Lord be with you. May Almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.