

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

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

### Monday March 15

Isaiah 65:17-21  
Ps 30:2,4,5-6,11-13b  
John 4:43-54

### Tuesday March 16

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12  
Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9  
John 5:1-16

### Wednesday March 17

#### St. Patrick

Isaiah 49:8-15  
Ps 145:8-9,13cd-14,17-18  
John 5:17-30

### Thursday March 18

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

### Friday March 19

#### St. Joseph

2 Samuel 7:4-5a,12-14a,16  
Ps 89:2-5,27,29  
Romans 4:13,16-18,22  
Matthew 1:16,18-21,24a  
or Luke 2:41-51a

### Saturday March 20

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 about them out loud?

It's Jesus who meets us in the confessional, appearing to us in the form of a priest who's sworn to 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 like going to Confession when guilt is driving us deeper into the darkness of low self-esteem, the fear of being unlovable, or an inability to forgive ourselves.

Guilt is a good motivator for repentance, and regret motivates us to change, but low self-esteem triggers shame, which says that we are undeserving of forgiveness.

Shame makes us even more afraid to face the truth about our sins.

However, God's image of you is not poor: He sees what is wonderful about you. He says you do deserve forgiveness. He wants to replace shame with joy. What keeps you from repenting? Perhaps you would benefit from a therapist or spiritual director who helps you heal from low self-esteem. Whatever opportunity will help



you get into the confessional, this is where your healing begins.

Jesus completes the healing by curing your spirit with forgiveness, mercy, and unconditional love through the words of absolution that he speaks to you through the priest.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus points out that whoever lives the truth (whoever is honest about themselves) "comes to the light" to be rescued. When we admit our sins, 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? If not, what are you waiting for? Blessings and healing await you!
2. Why does admitting our sins and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation set us free to live in joy and peace?
3. Describe a time when you lived in darkness; how did Jesus bring you into the light?