



**Newsletter**  
**St. Ignatius Sunday School**  
**Carrollton, TX- 75006**

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**A note from your HM:**

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February is known for the month of LOVE due to Valentine's day. But this year, it also happens to be the month when the great LENT starts. And as any true Christian knows, the only way to start a LENT is by confessing your sins and preparing your soul and your body to accept Jesus Christ as one's salvation.

Below, please read an article that was provided to me by George Aramath in regards to confession and what it means.

one leave God; I get to be with them when they come back to Him." The Confessional is a place where people let God's love win. The Confessional is the most joyful, humbling, and inspiring place in the world.

**WHAT DO I SEE DURING CONFESSION?** I think there are three things. First, I see the costly mercy of God in action. I get to regularly come face to face with the overwhelming, life-transforming power of God's love. I get to see God's love up-close and it reminds me of how good God is. Not many folks get to see the way in which God's sacrifice on the Cross is constantly breaking into people's lives and melting the hardest hearts. Jesus consoles those who are grieving their sins . . . and strengthens those who find themselves wanting to give up on God or on life. As a priest, I get to see this thing happen every day.

**I SEE A SAINT IN THE MAKING.** The second thing I see is a person who is still trying – a saint in the making. I don't care if this is the person's third confession this week; if they are seeking the Sacrament of

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A Priest Talks about What it's Like on His Side of the Confessional

A Priest Talks about What it's Like on His Side of the Confession: I was once riding in a shuttle-bus with a number of older folks on the way from an airport. They noticed that I was a priest and started asking questions about it. "Do you do all of the priest stuff?" "Yep." "Even the Confession thing?" "Yeah. All the time." One older lady gasped, "Well, I think that that would be the worst. It would be so depressing; hearing all about people's sins." I told them that it was the exact opposite. There is almost no greater place to be than with someone when they are coming back to God. I said, "It would be so depressing if I had to watch some-

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; if they are seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it means that they are trying. That's all that I care about. This thought is worth considering: going to Confession is a sign that you haven't given up on Jesus.

This is one of the reasons why pride is so deadly. I have talked with people who tell me that they don't want to go to Confession to their priest because their priest really likes them and "thinks that they are a good kid."

I have two things to say to this.

He will not be disappointed! What your priest will see is a person who is trying! I dare you to find a saint who didn't need to God's mercy! (Even Mary needed God's mercy; she received the mercy of God in a dramatic and powerful way at her conception. Boom. Law-tered.)

So what if the priest is disappointed? We try to be so impressive with so much of our lives. Confession is a place where we don't get to be impressive. Confession is a place where the desire to impress goes to die. Think about it: all other sins have the potential to cause us to race to the confessional, but pride is the one that causes us to hide from the God who could heal us.

#### DO I REMEMBER YOUR SINS? NO!

So often, people will ask if I remember people's sin from Confession. As a priest, I rarely, if ever, remember sins from the confessional. That might seem impossible, but the truth is, sins aren't all that impressive. They aren't like memorable sunsets or meteor showers or super-intriguing movies . . . they are more like the garbage.

And if sins are like garbage, then the priest is like God's garbage-man. If you ask a garbage-man about the gross-est thing he's ever had to haul to the dump, maaaaaybe he could remember it. But the fact is, once you get used to taking out the trash, it ceases to be noteworthy, it ceases to stand out.

Honestly, once you realize that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is less about the sin and more about Christ's death and resurrection having victory in a person's life, the sins lose all of their luster, and Jesus' victory takes center stage.

In Confession, we meet the life-transforming, costly love of God . . . freely given to us every time we ask for it. We meet Jesus who reminds us, "You are worth dying for . . . even in your sins, you are worth dying for."

Whenever someone comes to Confession, I see a person who is deeply loved by God and who is telling God that they love Him back. That's it, and that's all.

#### IN CONFESSION I SEE MY OWN WEAKNESS.

The third thing a priest sees when he hears Confessions is his own soul. It is a scary place for a priest. I cannot tell you how humbled I am when someone approaches Jesus' mercy through me.

I am not over-awed by their sins; I am struck by the fact that they have been able to recognize sins in their life that I have been blind to in my own. Hearing someone's humility breaks down my own pride. It is one of the best examinations of conscience.

But why is Confession a scary place for a priest? It is frightening because of the way in which Jesus trusts me to be a living sign of His mercy.

An Archbishop once told priests that we scarcely realize what is happening when we extend our hands over someone's head in absolution. We don't realize, he said, that the very Blood of Christ is dripping from our fingers onto their heads, washing the penitent clean.

The day after I was ordained, we had a little party and my dad stood up and made a toast. He has worked his entire life as an orthopedic surgeon, and he was a very good one. My whole life, his patients have come up to me at one time or another and told me how their lives have been changed because my dad was such a good surgeon.

So, there my dad was, standing in the midst of these people, and he began to say, "My whole life, I have used my hands to heal people's broken bodies. But from now on, my son. . . will use his hands (at this point, he got choked up) . . . He will use his hands to heal broken souls. His hands will save even more lives than mine have."

Confession is such a powerful place. All I have to do is offer God's mercy, love, and redemption . . . but I don't want to get in Jesus' way. The priest stands in judgment of no

one. In the Confessional, the only thing I have to offer is mercy.

#### I GET TO SACRIFICE FOR YOU.

Lastly, when a priest hears Confessions, he is taking on another responsibility.

One time, after college, I was returning to Confession after a long time and a lot of sin and the priest simply gave me something like "one Hail Mary" as my penance. I stopped.

"Um, Father...? Did you hear everything I said?" "Yes, I did." "Don't you think I should get a bigger penance than that?" He looked at me with great love and said, "No. That small penance is all that I'm asking of you." He hesitated, and then continued, "But you should know . . . I will be fasting for you for the next 30 days."

I was stunned. I didn't know what to do. He told me that the Catechism teaches that the priest must do penance for all those who come to him for Confession. And here he was, embracing a severe penance for all of my severe sins.

This is why Confession reveals the priest's own soul; it reveals his willingness to sacrifice his life with Christ. He sees our sins as a burden that he will take up (with Jesus!) and offer them to the Father, while offering us the mercy of God.

Remember, Confession is always a place of victory. Whether you have confessed a particular sin for the first time, or if this is the 12,001st time, every Confession is a win for Jesus.

And I, a priest, get to be there. That's what it's like . . . I get to sit and watch Jesus win His children back all day.

*Provided by George Cramath*

### Did you know in Qurubana?

#### One of the most important part of the Holy Qurbana

The holy trinity is a combination of the father, son, and holy spirit. When they all come together they create the holy trinity. When we draw the cross the three fingers we use to draw represent the father, son, and holy spirit. Also when we draw the cross we should think in our head father, son, and the holy spirit. When you draw the cross you shouldn't just hit your forehead you should draw it thinking it has meaning and value.

*Kannah Mathew*

*4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

### Upcoming Sunday School Events.

- ♦ March 3rd, 2013 Sunday School and Youth League are joining together for a voluntary work trip to Dallas Life ( a homeless shelter) @ 1100 Cadiz st, Dallas, Tx 75215.
  - ⇒ If any of the parents would like to volunteer or have any additional questions, please see a Sunday School teacher or HM.
  - ⇒ Any student of 14 years or older can join this voluntary work trip.
  - ⇒ The volunteer group will have to leave the church by 12:15 p.m, as our volunteer time is from 01:00 to 06:00 p.m.

## Question

Why can't we have women priests or clergy?

## Answer

The Orthodox Church does not allow the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy. It is a matter of Holy Tradition, as well as a vision of ministry as something not limited to the ordained priesthood. Some "modern" Churches, which are reformed, can easily change their laws, allowing women into the clergy. However, ours is an ancient church that strictly follows the Orthodox tradition allowing only the ordination of men. Another reason that the Orthodox Church made this rule is that men are considered to be the head of the family, and the Church is an extension of the family.

This controversy is a recent one, and began outside of the Orthodox Church. The teachings of our Church state that all people should undertake essential ministries. In the Soviet Era, the grandmothers had a greater impact on the Church than other clergy when the Communist regime passed laws separating the Church from state and schools. In Jesus' own time we see the exemplary ministry of the myrrh-bearing women who served Our Lord while the male disciples hid in fear and denied knowledge of Him.

Saint Paul speaks of a variety of functions, which are critical to making the ministry of the Church whole and complete. The ordained priesthood is essential, yet there are a variety of other ministries which are extensions of the priestly ministry of Our Lord. These other ministries must be carried out in order to ensure the fullness of the faith and Church life.

It is important to understand what the priesthood is, and equally important, what it is not. Orthodoxy does not see the priesthood as a "right" or a "privilege." It does not see the clergy as a caste apart from the People of God. Just as Christ stood in the midst of His People, the clergy do not stand above the People of God, but among them. It does not understand ordination to the priesthood as a matter of justice, equality, political correctness, or human rights. No one, not even males, has the "right" to ordination. We believe that it is God who does the choosing.

Finally, a shining example of how a woman can change the world through God is Mother Theresa. She was a humble nun. For over 45 years, she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, first throughout India and then in other countries. For her outstanding contribution, she received the Nobel Prize, the National Prize, the Congressional Gold Medal, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and numerous others.

As you can see, there are many ways to serve the Lord and the Lord's people, the priesthood is just one of them. These roles are open to men and women equally, though the Holy Sacrament of Priesthood is reserved for men.

A special thanks to George Aramath for helping us find the research material for this article.

*Contributed by 7th graders.*

## What we are learning:

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Lesson 14 thru Lesson 16

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Lesson 11 thru Lesson 18

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Lesson 20 thru Lesson 22

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lesson 19 thru Lesson 20

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lesson 14 thru Lesson 17

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lesson 15 thru Lesson 20

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lesson 16 thru Lesson 18

9<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lesson 11 thru Lesson 13

10<sup>th</sup> Grade: True Faith

11<sup>th</sup> Grade: Peer Pressure

12<sup>th</sup> Grade: Sacraments



## **Know Your Teachers: Binoi Skariah**

Hello,

I was born in New Delhi, India.

I immigrated to the DFW area when I was 3 years old.

I grew up with St. Ignatius Church. My parents are V.U. and Mariamma Skariah.

I am married to Ciney Skariah

I have two kids: Gabriel and Mikhail

Currently I live in Frisco.

I Graduated from Texas A&M and I majored in Petroleum Engineering.

Currently I work as an IT Manager.

This is my first year teaching in Sunday school.

It is a lot of work, but very rewarding at the same time. I get to spend time and know the kids that I see grow up in the church and run by me in the hall. Teaching gives me better perspective as a parent, as well. Teaching the Bible and our Church values to children brings us one step closer to the Lord, which is the wonderful gift these children give back to Sunday school teachers.

*BinoiSkariah*