



RECONCILIATION SUNDAY- ADVENT 2017

CELEBRATING FORGIVENESS IN PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

Cardinal Martini, the wise former Archbishop of Milan who died a few years ago, recommended asking oneself three main questions in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation: since my last celebration of reconciliation/in recent months

- *What do I most thank God for?*
- *What am I most sorry for?*
- *Where do I want to ask help and/or healing?*

You might like to take time in the coming week to ponder the following questions. Spending time with this reflection is partly about *letting God show you* where to look....be open to any surprises, and the God of Surprises!

(A) What do I most thank God for recently?

- and for **whom** do I most thank God? How might I show this gratitude?

(B) What am I most sorry for?

-in my relationships with other people?

Do I take for granted those with whom I live? Do I make time for them? Do I listen well?

Can I recall an incident where I was difficult to live with – moody or overcritical?

If I work, do I work with integrity, with respect for others' time and resources?

If I feel I have been very hurt, is there anyone I need to forgive, to take the first difficult step of not wanting or seeking revenge?

Do I use people – for personal gain, attention, my reputation, sexually or in other ways? Do I gossip? Do I ever encourage or affirm anybody?

- in my relationship with myself?

Am I honest with myself and prepared to accept criticism? Or blind to my own weaknesses, and unwilling to try to change? Am I self-indulgent or selfish in my approach to alcohol or food? To material possessions? In general?

Do I actively seek to recognise and resist temptation? Am I willing really to try and love myself in a healthy way (remembering the call by Jesus to love our neighbours and ourselves)?

- in my relationship with God?

Do I try to make my relationship with God a living one? Do I give time to God in prayer or am I “too busy”? Someone once said “God is very short of gratitude”; do I ever express my gratitude? Or do I take God for granted except when I feel I need God?

(C) In what area of my life do I most want to ask help and healing?

Is anything particularly worrying or upsetting me at the moment? Is there a habit I want to break but feel I can't by myself – including criticising and failing to forgive myself?

Looking over the relationships in my life, where do I most need help and healing?

D) How would I like to live from now? What gift or quality would I like to ask God for this Christmas and for my life?