



President's Office

March Devotion

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10

Rev. Justin Panzer, District President

What is the largest number of people to whom you have ever had to admit a mistake? Most of us would never want our sins to be made public because it's embarrassing, shameful and ugly.

We can hide our sins and failures from most people, most of the time. Our co-workers don't know how we act at home. Our neighbors don't know what we do at work. Our friends at church only see the appearance that we cultivate.

The context of Psalm 51 tells us that David tried very hard to cover multiple sins as recorded in 2 Samuel 11-12. Even though David was the king, he was guilty of lying, adultery and murder. Imagine how it must have been for David. He was not particularly an evil man, at least no more so than the rest of us. In fact, he had been called “a man after God's own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). But like us, David could get caught in sin, with one sin leading to another until he was doing things he never thought he could possibly do.

God's prophet Nathan confronted David in public, and he confessed his sin so that everyone in the entire country knew what he had done. David not only confessed his sin to Nathan, but he also sat down and carefully wrote Psalm 51. David confessed his sin so publicly that for over 3,000 years people have repeated this story of his failure, our failure, and God's grace.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Those are words sung in the Offertory. In these words, we not only speak or confess our sins to God, but we also hear Him speak His gracious promises of forgiveness back to us, which He has bestowed upon us in Christ. David's words plead for God to have mercy on him because of God's unfailing love.

I can't see into your homes or hearts, and I really don't want to. I can only see into my own heart, and if you're like me you are capable of thinking and doing things that no one else would suspect.

But when you confess your sins, God is there to pronounce His complete forgiveness to you. That's it, it's done! Your sin is removed because Jesus shed His blood for you and was bodily raised again from the dead for you. Now Jesus wants to give that forgiveness to you. You hear this message of Good News preached at church, and you read of it in the Scriptures. You are joined to His death and resurrection in the waters of your Baptism. When you eat of His body and drink of His blood in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, He is personally forgiving you.

Dear friends, take the joy of the forgiveness of sins in Christ – which is the very message of Easter – with you all the time. Be not only a regular receiver of Christ's gifts in Word and Sacrament, but also invite someone you know to one of your church services throughout the Lenten and Easter season. **He is risen, and so shall we! Alleluia!**

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