*"In him we live and move and have our being"*

*(Acts 17:28)*

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Lent is a time, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, when “we prepare to celebrate the event of the Cross and Resurrection - in which the Love of God redeemed the world and shone its Light upon history.” It is a time when we seek out who we are at the deepest level of our being.  It is a time when we ask the difficult question, who is God and what is my relationship with God?  How do I live my faith?  Lent invites us, through the traditional practices of the Christian life, to nourish our faith by listening to the Word of God and by receiving the Sacraments, and at the same time to grow in charity and in love for God and neighbor, through the specific practices of fasting, penance and almsgiving. It is a time to rekindle our faith in Jesus so that we might be instruments of the Lord within our world today.

The invitation to the Sacrament of Penance offers us an opportunity to rekindle our faith; to draw closer to God. The Sacrament of Penance is a beautiful experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy. Not only does it free us from our sins but it also challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. In the Sacrament of Penance, we meet the Lord, who wants to grant forgiveness and the grace to live a renewed life in Him.

On March 25, parishes throughout the Diocese of Orlando will participate in a “Day of Reconciliation” to provide numerous opportunities for believers to journey back to God through the Sacrament of Penance, also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Confession. A list of all parishes can found on the Diocese of Orlando website and by contacting the parish of your choice, you will learn more about the hours during which the Sacrament of Penance will be offered.

It may be some time since you participated in the Sacrament of Penance. You may have questions about what to do or say. There are resources available on this website to assist you. I also encourage you to speak with a priest, if you have more questions. The Sacrament of Penance is a Sacrament of healing; of forgiveness. The Lord calls us to Him, to experience God’s most gracious Love fully and to extend this forgiveness to others. Do not be afraid to avail yourself to this extraordinary Sacrament. It is from Christ to you.

May the Sacrament of Penance bring about a greater faith implanted in our hearts and minds so we may realize that only God’s Love is able to conquer evil and death. May our hearts experience a conversion to Christ so that we may receive His forgiveness and live in His Peace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John Noonan

Bishop of Orlando