
I Ask You Forgiveness

You may have asked someone that you may have hurt or offended for forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness is an experience that requires humility, courage and love. It is more demanding and profound than saying that you are sorry. When I say to someone I do not know, "I am sorry," or to someone close to me because of an error, and not necessarily wanted to do. Instead, I ask forgiveness because of the love or friendship of the one I have hurt. With all my heart I hope that person will say; "I forgive you." If he does, the bonds of friendship are reestablished, reinforced and renewed. We can say we are sorry and make another error and again we say we are sorry. Asking forgiveness supposes that we will do everything that is possible not to hurt the beloved person or friend again. Asking for forgiveness and being forgiven implies this intention.

Our relationship with God is like this. God loves us. He includes us in the Word he addresses to his Son: "You are my beloved Son. In you I have put all my love." Through baptism, we become sons and daughters of the Father. We are members of the Body of Christ. Our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit. All that we do – or don't do - to those in need who are brothers of Christ, it is to Him that we do – or do not. We can hurt God, by ignoring Him by severing or loosening the bond of personal love that unites us to Him. This is where sin resides. We recognize when our relationship to God has been troubled, weakened, even broken by our actions, omissions and attitudes. This is because we are concerned or have been lost or were far away from the God's Love. We need to say: "Father I ask for your forgiveness." convinced that that he will answer us.

But how does he?

God answers our pleas for forgiveness in many ways as described in the Message to the People of God from the Synod on the Word of God. God has a Word that has a voice (described by the Revelation, in the Holy Scriptures), a face (Christ), a house the (Church), a road (the mission in the world, in our lives, in our relationships). The Word of God becomes forgiveness through the Son by the spreading of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven In 20:22).

The Risen Lord wants that his benevolent voice to echo in the house of the Church, that his merciful face appears, that that forgiveness be given in a way that it reflects his love and personal love of the Father.

In each of the sacraments, Acts of Christ, there is a personal meeting, between divine Word and Act on one side, and on the other, human word and action. It is like this with the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. In this way that it presents itself as a personal meeting where we can say to God, through the priest who represents Him: "I ask you for forgiveness." Then we can hear the Lord say to us, through the minister's voice; "I forgive your sins." We then hear one voice, see a face, voice that we hear and face that we see in the house of the Church. It is now possible for us to take together the road of the Gospel that is mission in the heart of our personal history, our relationships with ourselves, with others and with God. Lent will begin soon and invites us to the same life experience.

+Bishop Jacques Berthelet, C.S.V.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, virgin



We will soon be celebrating Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha's Feast Day which is April 17th, the anniversary of her death. Once again, because this day coincides with Easter week, we will not be able to celebrate the liturgy that is anticipated for Blessed Kateri's Feast Day. As April 17th coincides once every three years with Holy Week, or in the octave of Easter, the Conference of Canadian Catholic Bishops, after consultation with the Bishops of Canada and the Committee for Reconciliation, Solidarity and Communion with Native People, has proposed that the Feast Day of Kateri Tekakwitha be celebrated on June 22nd the anniversary of Kateri's Beatification. This proposal will be sent, shortly, to the Holy See (to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints). We hope, that in 2010, 330th Anniversary of Kateri's death, we will celebrate the liturgy for Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha on June 22nd in Canada, and in the United States, Blessed Kateri's Feast Day is celebrated on July 14th.

It is certainly possible, on certain occasions, and when permitted by the Church calendar, to celebrate a votive mass in honor of Blessed Kateri.

We can always pray through the intercession of Kateri, as the Patroness of Ecology and Environment, the Patroness of Consecrated Virgins. Blessed Kateri reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters in humanity, brothers and sisters in Christ by our baptism. Finally, we are invited to pray to the Lord, that soon, Kateri Tekakwitha will be recognized as a Saint, in all the Church, through her canonization.

**+ Jacques Berthelet,
C.S.V. Bishop of St-Jean-Longueuil**