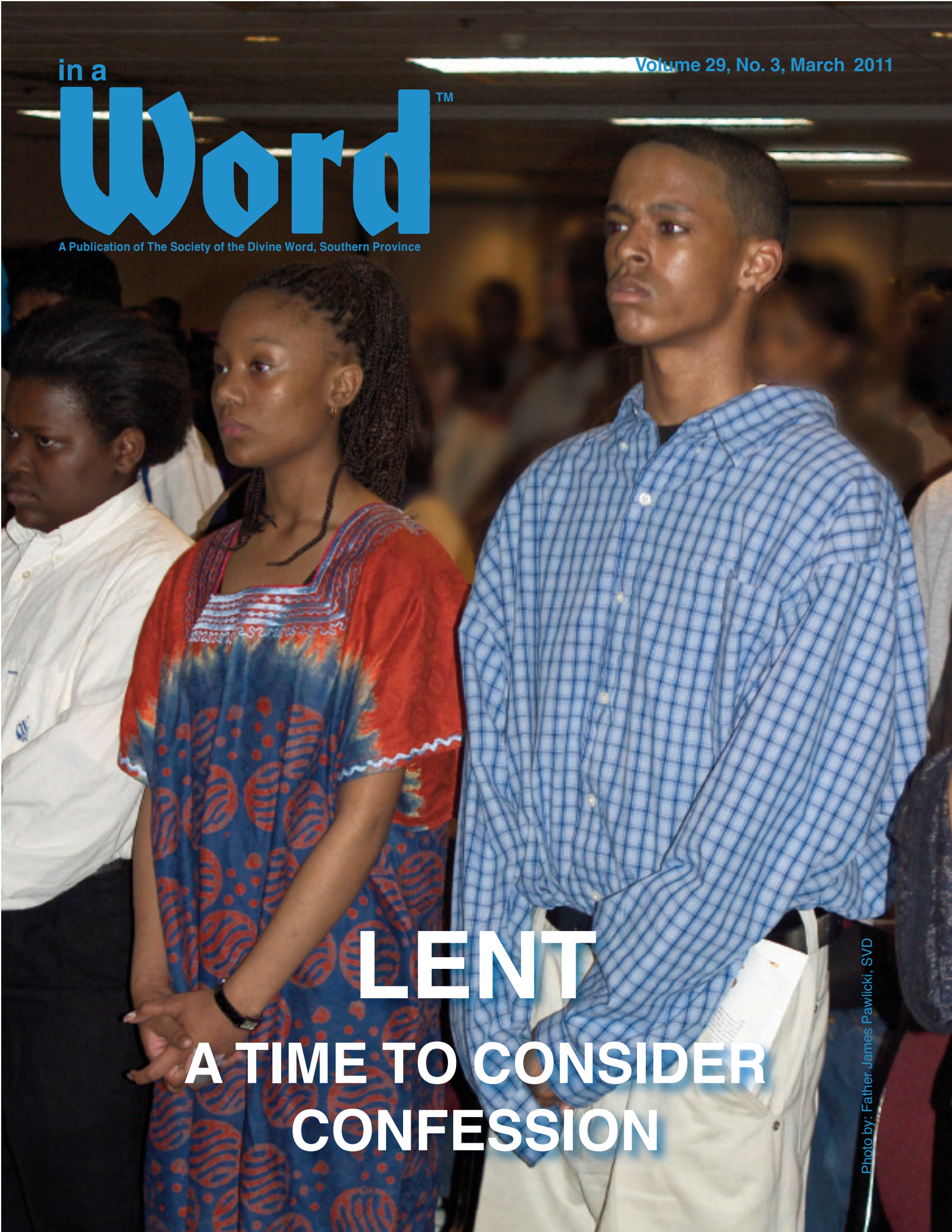


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Word™

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LENT A TIME TO CONSIDER CONFESSION

Photo by: Father James Pawlicki, SVD

LENT

Today's world views the sacrament of Penance as irrelevant. "No need for confession or reconciliation" people will say. Its almost as if we have absolved ourselves of sin.

Has sin gone away? Don't people sin anymore? The answer of course is yes. Yet, we live in a world that wants confession abolished .

Maybe we today are afraid of confession. Perhaps our modern society has forgotten the advice of the wise Confucius. He once said: "If the archer misses the target, he cannot blame anyone but himself."

This is a maxim we need to apply to the sacrament of penance. For our society has conveniently yet dangerously adopted the attitude in life that we do very little personal wrong. Blame the other person...not ourselves. Why are we so afraid of blaming ourselves? Are we perfect?

No, confession is still needed so it may be prudent to consider the value of the sacrament of Penance as we begin this season of Lent. Let's answer some of the common questions concerning the sacrament.

Why go to confession?

The answer is simple. MEN AND WOMEN SIN.

Remember the ingredients of sin....the act we commit is wrong, we know it is wrong, and yet we do it anyway. That is sin. Everyone of us since the time of Adam and Eve are guilty of this. The sin of Adam and Eve commonly called original sin is something every human being has inherited. In its starkest terms "original sin means that sooner or later we as human beings will sin."

That is why we have confession...to admit our faults to our God and ourselves.



Can't I just tell God I am sorry?

Sure you could. But that doesn't take care of the problem! Sin always involves more than myself. When I sin I affect other people. In truly seeking forgiveness we must by necessity tell them as well.

How can I tell other people I am sorry..... I don't know who they are!

that is precisely why we have confession. The priest represents not only Christ but the community. In his formal act of granting penance and absolution the priest representing the community is letting us know that Christ and the community forgives. There is healing in knowing that. I cannot possibly know all the people who I have caused harm because of my sin. I can't tell them all so I symbolically do that thru the priest.

How is it possible that my sin affects so many people.

Use the example of anger. I get angry in the morning at my children, my wife or husband. I may even carry this anger to others. They in turn are wounded and carry that hurt as the day goes on. Because of their hurt others will be affected because of their actions the rest of the day. In short, sin mushrooms and expands. There is no such thing as sin that is personal between me and God alone. Sin affects other people!

But why tell a priest? He's human like me, isn't he?

Sure the priest is human and that is the point. He represents the community. But we miss an even more important part of the sacrament of reconciliation. By "speaking" and stating our sins we are healing ourselves. When we adopt a posture of repentance and kneeling down to say that "I have done wrong" something happens to us. We are changed and we are healed. Speaking out loud the wrong is more beneficial than one can ever imagine.

But I always say the same sins over and over..what good is there in that?

Again there is always goodness in admitting that I am guilty. By admitting in confession we have done wrong we admit the need we have for Christ to guide our life. Yes, the sins may be the same but by admitting to them and trying to work things out is what is important. God wants people who try! Look at Simon Peter...he made numerous mistakes. He even denied Christ...but he tried and for that Christ love him. It is the same with us. Our sins

Time for Confession



might be the same, we commit the same ones over and over but by admitting to them we acknowledge our humanness and frailty and the need we have for God. Finally, if we consistently repeat the same we need

the sacrament to reflect on our behavior and the reason why we commit the same sin. Are we really sorry for the sin? Or are we just going through the motions and so blocking the blessings of confession?

Is confession really private?

Yes it is. The priest must maintain his vow of confidentiality and silence. This is a sacred trust. Do not be alarmed if you think the priest recognizes your voice or sees you because you face the priest. Most priests are like other human beings who admire people who can admit to their faults and are trying to do better with their lives.

How do I go to confession?

You can go face to face to a priest or kneel behind a screen or cloth. You make the sign of the cross and mention the last time you may have gone to confession. Then you describe your sins. The priest may then discuss things with you or you may ask the priest any questions you wish. When that is complete you make an act of contrition and are then absolved of your sins.

Penance services are wonderful opportunities to see the fullness of confession. With others around us we reflect on our sins, faults, and failings. Then we privately approach a priest and admit these sins and are given absolution



Who should go?

All Catholics who have attained the age of reason must confess their sins at least once a year.

When can I go?

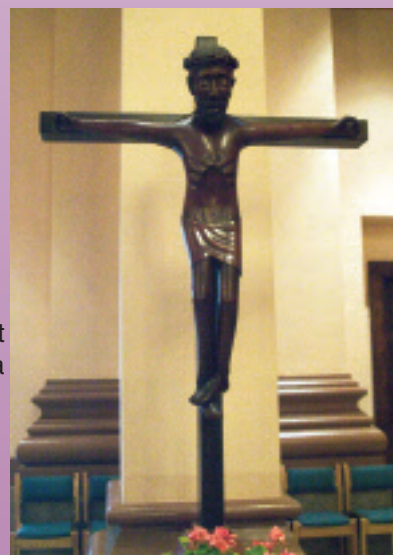
Every Church has designated times for confession. However, you can always make an appointment to see the priest and arrange for confession. Confession can take place at any time and actually any place.



This is Lent....a time to get ourselves closer to God.

The best way to examine our lives is to use the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation which our Catholic Church has provided.

Sin exists and yes we do sin. Remember that all of us do wrong. We cannot blame others. At some point we must accept our humanness and frailty and speak to God our faults. The Sacrament of Penance gives us a great opportunity for self evaluation and improvement. The sense of peace and wholeness is one of the great benefits of making a good confession.



in a word or two

Ansel Augustine has been promoted to associate director of the CYO/Youth & Young Adult Ministry office of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The office has operated without an associate director since Hurricane Katrina. In addition to his new position, Augustine will continue to work as coordinator of the black Catholic youth and young adult ministry through the CYO office, as he has done for the past four years. In this position, his focus has primarily been to provide training and consultation for predominantly African-American parishes. Augustine also has coordinated retreats and events such as the Habari Gani Leadership Retreat for leadership training in the context of black Catholic spirituality and worked to connect African-American parishes to archdiocesan youth programs.



On Sunday, January 30, 2011 Bishop Dominic Carmon, SVD culminated the yearlong celebration of his 50 years as priest serving God's people. The celebration took place at St. Raymond & St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in New Orleans, Louisiana. As the celebrant and homilist, Bishop Carmon started the parish celebration of Black History Month. As only one who has lived it, Bishop Carmon modestly told his story and the story of those who preceded him as an African American priest during segregation. His words vividly testified to our theme for Black History month; "Serving Through Love - the Legacy Continues".

Bishop Carmon spoke about himself and several African American priests, Divine Word Missionaries, and their struggle to answer God's call to serve His people in Louisiana. Despite the bigotry, prejudice, and hatred directed toward them, they accepted their assignments and bravely served their communities in word and actions. Their persecution, at the hands of those they sought to aid, was reminiscent of the early Christians. Their response to the opposition was one of tolerance, patience, and forgiveness. They serve as inspirations to all of us who had seen few, if any, examples of blacks serving in our Catholic faith. Because of their perseverance, their Christ-like demeanor, they continue the legacy of love. The parish family thanked Bishop Carmon for his testimony and his life and pray that God continues to bless and protect him.

We thank Father Anthony Bozeman, SSJ for sending this information to us.

It's been five years since Hurricane Katrina destroyed their

campus but on Monday, February 21, St. Mary's Academy middle and high school students will begin taking classes in their brand new state-of-the-art classrooms.

"The entire Maryite family is extremely

excited that this moment has finally arrived," said St. Mary's Academy principal Sr. Jennie Jones, SSF, adding that it has been a long and arduous process to get to this point.

Since the Hurricane, St. Mary's Academy has operated in several locations. In 2006, the school joined with St. Augustine High School and Xavier Preparatory to form the MAX School for one year. In August of 2006, as part of a generous gift from the Archdiocese of New Orleans, St. Mary's Academy moved its classes to the former St. James Major School, located at 3774 Gentilly Blvd. The school also expanded its curriculum to offer classes for Pre-k-4 through 5th grades to help accommodate students and families displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The elementary and middle schools became co-educational while the high school continued its legacy as an all-girls private school. Operating with 620 students, the school successfully accommodated many of the city's displaced youth.

In the fall of 2007, St. Mary's Academy returned to its Chef Menteur Highway campus. Modular buildings housed students in Pre-k-3 through 12th grades while the rebuilding of the permanent campus took place.

The new 100,000 sq. ft campus boasts 31 state-of-the-art classrooms and connecting wings. Each classroom is equipped with SMART Boards, DVD's and televisions and touch enabled computers. Additional highlights include Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Language and MAC labs, band and chorus rooms, a piano lab, fully customized library, bookstore, Student Union Café and gymnasium.

For more information, call the Lisa T. Ross at (504)810-6546 or visit www.smaneworleans.com



Finally, after five years the new St. Mary's Academy is complete

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 6,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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