



The How and Why Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation

CONFESSION

by the

NUMBERS

POPE BENEDICT XVI is emphatic about confession. “The renewal of the Church in America depends on the renewal of the practice of penance and the growth in holiness which that sacrament both inspires and accomplishes,” he said at Nationals Stadium in Washington, D.C.

Pope John Paul II was also emphatic. He spent his last years as Pope pleading for more confession. He made it one of the Church’s two top priorities in 2001’s “At the Beginning of the New Millennium.” In 2002’s *Misericordia Dei* he sought to correct abuses of it. In 2003’s encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, he used formal language to declare its necessity.

Pope Benedict XVI shares both John Paul’s urgency and his compassionate love for the sacrament of mercy.

“The liberating power of this sacrament,” Benedict told Americans, “in which our honest confession of sin is met by God’s merciful word of pardon and peace, needs to be rediscovered and re-appropriated by every Catholic.”

Use this guide to rediscover, and help others rediscover, this crucial sacrament.

PHOTO: FACE: CNS; KNEELER, SHUTTERSTOCK.