"Even if you do not confess, God is not ignorant of the deed, since he knew it before it was committed. Why then do you not speak of it? Does the transgression become heavier by the confession? No, it becomes lighter and less troublesome. And this is why he wants you to confess: not that you should be punished, but that you should be forgiven; not that he may learn your sin—how could that be, since he has seen it?—but that you may learn what favor he bestows. He wishes you to learn the greatness of his grace, so that you may praise him perfectly, that you may be slower to sin, that you may be quicker to virtue. And if you do not confess the greatness of the need, you will not understand the enormous magnitude of his grace."

— St. John Chrysostom

Dear Parents,

Happy first full week of Advent!  What a great time of joy and anticipation!  I hope you each are feeling the excitement of the coming of Jesus, in your preparations for the celebration of Christmas with your children and extended families, with the many wishes of Merry Christmas and the decorations everywhere, and with a peace in your heart that comes from festivity of this annual birthday party!!

As you complete (or start!) your Christmas shopping, please remember to add a binder and some special additions for your child’s Jesus Book. This may also be a great time to ask the very special people in your child’s life (Grandpa, Grandma, godparents, aunts and uncles) to write a letter of encouragement to you son/daughter for their Jesus Book.

Please continue to practice the Act of Contrition, perhaps every night, with your child.  An examination of conscience once a week is also a good preparation for First Penance.  On a slower night, when bedtime is more calm and not frantic, sit with your child and have him/her listen to you read an examination (one found on line for children is good) and have him/her think about the day or week passed and their actions.

The reading role for the First Penance service is filled.  The only openings now are for singers which we need many of!!! Please talk with your child and ask if he/she is interested to sing in pairs with another child at the microphone.  Let me know soon.

I would also ask that you RSVP to the Good Shepherd Day parent track of the First Penance retreat day. The day is mandatory for the second graders, but you, as their parents, are *invited* to attend.  Email me if you are interested.  Retreat: Saturday, January 27th, 9:00-noon.

Godbless,                                                                                                                                                                             Mrs. Gulden

**The confession of sins (from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC)**

**1455** The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible.

**1456** Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly."54

When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, "for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."55

**1457** According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year."56 Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.57 Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.58

**1458** Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.59 Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful:60

Whoever confesses his sins . . . is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear "man" - this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner" - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made. . . . When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.61