

Lenten Campaign to Promote Sacrament of Reconciliation Returns for 2nd Year

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, announced today that the initiative to promote the sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance called, "The Light is on for You," will return for a second year in 2010.

The campaign, first initiated in the Archdiocese of Washington several years ago, uses billboards, bus, internet and TV ads to encourage Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to reconnect with the sacrament during the 40-day period of prayer and repentance that begins on February 17, Ash Wednesday.

Last year, the Archdiocese implemented the program for the first time and more than 8,000 Catholics responded by going to Reconciliation, including many who were participating for the first time in many years.

Recent statistics indicate that approximately 11 percent of Catholics go to confession once a year or more. Comparatively, in 1965, 38 percent of all American Catholics went to confession at least once a month.

"The Church needs to do a better job of educating our people about the spiritual benefits offered by the sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as the direct connection between Reconciliation and the reception of the Eucharist," Archbishop O'Brien said. "We are also hopeful that this initiative will lead people who have been away from the sacrament not only back to the confessional, but also back to the pews. We hope it helps them to deepen their faith, while also knocking down some of the myths and stereotypes associated with confession."

Unlike last year when every parish in the Archdiocese had priests hearing confessions from 7-8:30, this year parishes will set their own preferred time each Wednesday in Lent (excluding Ash Wednesday and the Wednesday of Holy Week) to make the sacrament available.

For more information about “The Light is on for You,” contact a parish near you. Visit www.archbalt.org for a listing of parishes and for more information about the program.