

Day of Confessions draws thousands seeking grace and renewal

When Adam Makarewicz returned to the Catholic Church after nine years, confession was key to rebuilding his faith.

“In a sense, confession has been the driving force to bring my will with God’s will,” said Makarewicz, who took part in the annual Day of Confessions in the Archdiocese of Edmonton on March 3.



Adam Makarewicz

“When I came back to the Church, it was confession that really lifted so much of the negativity that had been weighing on my conscience, that was keeping me from God,” Makarewicz said. “It has a way of encouraging you to live a good Catholic life and avoid sin because you know you are held accountable.”

The Day of Confessions is one day a year, during Lent, when priests devote themselves to celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Makarewicz was one of 470 people who came to St. Joseph’s Basilica to experience God’s forgiveness firsthand. For 12 hours, confessions were heard there and at five other ‘hub’ parishes in the Greater Edmonton Area. Hours varied at other parishes across the Archdiocese. Altogether, more than 40 priests helped an estimated 2,600 people celebrate the sacrament.

For Rev. Simmy Joseph, the Day of Confessions is an opportunity for many to return to the Church and, as a priest, it’s a great joy to hear of Catholics –

like Makarewicz – who do that.



Rev. Simmy Joseph

“It shows that God is working in their lives. They want to come back to Jesus,” said Father Joseph, an associate pastor at the basilica.

“Repentance is a gift from God, and for many it can be the first step to bringing God back into their lives. So the Day of Confessions is really important to have. A couple people today have even told me they had not been to confession in six or seven years.”

Normally, Father Joseph hears around 20 confessions each day. On the Day of Confessions, he heard more than 70. No matter what sins are confessed or how long the person has been away from the confessional, the priest offers the same message.

“Confession gives you the grace to begin a new life – this is what’s most important,” Joseph said.

“Many find comfort in sharing with a priest, because they have no one else to bring these concerns to. So when they share their feelings, I always tell them God will never abandon them. No sin or regret can separate you from Him. God’s grace is always there.”



Emily Grieve

In the confessional, Emily Grieve found more than the forgiveness of God. The sacrament has restored her sense of self-worth, and it has taught her to be more open with others.

“In the times I’ve been going to confession, I feel less misunderstood and isolated,” she said. “Loneliness and alienation is a problem for many people today, and it’s sin that causes a lot of that. We can feel ashamed, and because of that, we don’t feel worthy to be loved by others.”

“But by telling your sins to another person, they lose their power over you. You’re not trapped in your own mind. You’re freed of a burden by voicing that guilt and that sin to someone else. It makes you realize you’re not alone and you don’t have to struggle through things alone.”

Makarewicz agrees. More than anything, the sacrament of reconciliation has given him the confidence to know he is not held back by past mistakes.

“Knowing there’s nothing I can do that would not allow God to love me – it’s helped me in my ability to forgive myself and not live in the past,” he said.