

Dear Parishioners,

There was a time in my life as a priest when I tried to play golf. I was terrible at it. Like most people who play the game I wasn't very good, that is not what made me terrible at it. There is an adage for the game I could not adhere to which says, "Play within yourself." Every time I had a really good shot my expectations rose beyond reality and every subsequent shot had to be as perfect as the one before it. That was impossible though because I never had that kind of talent; I had flaws in my swing, I could not gauge distances well, I did not have the ability to have fun. That's why I tried bowling (and I'm not very good at that either).

That's the way life is, there is nothing perfect about it. We would love to be able to say we have the perfect system for getting through the day without conflict or pain wrenching their way into it, but that's not realistic. It seems that every time we decide to make an improvement in our homes, or redecorate, try a different kind of landscaping so that it looks just like what we've always wanted something goes wrong. Life just doesn't seem to go the way we would like it to and so we keep on trying because as the saying goes, "failure is not an option." Of course that saying is not realistic either because we would never choose an option to fail; rather failure is an unfortunate consequence of our efforts.

Over the years we have attempted to find a different solution to where we should hold confession. There are two confessionals in the church which have, as of late, been used as storage while we have tried several other different solutions. I can see why my predecessors have tried other options for confession. The confessionals in the church do not offer the capacity to go to confession face to face; an option that is preferable to lots of penitents as well as confessors, including me. There is something very powerful and beautiful about being in the presence of a penitent who truly desires reconciliation with God. It is humbling to know that I sit there in the person of Jesus Christ offering his love, his touch, his mercy through the grace of absolution. Unfortunately, everything we have tried over the years has failed; the spaces have been too far away, not private enough, or quiet enough. We've been trying to improvise our way through this sacrament and nothing seems to work.

We have to play within ourselves.

What I have done is I have cleared out one of the present confessionals and it will be the place where the sacrament of reconciliation will be held. Confessions will be private and they will be as dignified as possible with the constraints we have. Our celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be far from ideal, but better than what we have tried in the past few years, and that is good. God's grace has a way of perfecting creation even with its flaws and defects and I can live with that. Just don't ask me to play golf with you. My guess is God would prefer it that way too.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel