

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Again, I want to thank all those who helped at our Advent Reconciliation service at St. Michael's this last week. I am grateful to all who give of their time and talent to help make the experience as prayerful and peaceful as possible. For those who were unable to attend our service, there are still many opportunities for confessions in our parishes and in the Saint Cloud area. Refer to the scheduling postcard we sent out to parishioners and/or continue to check our bulletin for times and locations of confessions scheduled throughout the area.

Take advantage of these opportunities to receive the mercy of God and be recreated by his love. The sacrament is truly a powerful instrument of His grace and is effective in bringing us closer to Christ. Please do not let the year pass without going to confession and receiving the absolution for any sins you may have committed.

### **Our Lady of Guadalupe**

The celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is an important celebration for all in the Americas, the Universal Church, and the season of Advent. We remember that Mary, the Lady of Guadalupe, is the patroness of all the Americas, not just Latin America. She has come to us to encourage us in our faith and always point us to greater trust in her son, Jesus Christ. This feast is more than just a cultural celebration. While Mary appeared in the garb and manner of the local people, she also expressed the catholicity or "universality" of the Church – that it is a home for all people from all places and times. It is also a good reminder for us in this season that Christ came into the world through Mary his mother. It is in welcoming Mary that we welcome Jesus.

I encourage you this week and throughout this season to ask for the help and intercession of Mary. Fr. Oswaldo has also written a very nice reflection on Mary for his column in this bulletin. Please check out that as well. The evening Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe is at 6:00 p.m. at St. Joseph. It is in Spanish and will involve some of the traditional customs of the native Mexican people that continues to be incorporated in the celebration.

Fr. Timothy Gapinski