

**I'd like to thank everyone who made St. Patrick's Day a success again this year. Many people spent many hours preparing the meal in St. Rita's and the parade through the streets of Cameron. Our altar society and the Knights of Columbus created a lot of enjoyment in an orderly way. Good work often goes unacknowledged. Some who work behind the scenes don't want their names or deeds known. They trust that God knows the good they do, and that is enough for them. If we seek credit for the good we do, it appears that we did it only for our own glory. So, many of our good deeds are never made public.**

**How ironic it is that many of our bad deeds do become public. Children try to be sneaky, but parents somehow find out. Criminals try to leave no evidence, but most often they do. Our electronic devices keep an embarrassing record of our desires. When you visit a website, your computer remembers the address, and many websites remember yours. When you send email or delete it, it isn't really gone. It still exists on some computer some place. The same is true of text messages and call lists on cell phones. Americans demand a right to privacy, but there is no privacy any more. Our credit cards, bank accounts, and much personal information are tied together. If people are determined, they can find out a lot about any one of us.**

**Those who run for political office will have their entire past painstakingly scrutinized, and former sins will be brought to light. Our bad deeds can become more public than our good ones. Yet we trick ourselves into thinking that no one knows when we sin, and no one will ever know the secret choices we make.**

**God knows. Our bad choices hurt us, and they hurt our attempts to be honest with others. When we sin, we suffer, and other people do too. God knows what we do.**

**The scribes and the Pharisees in today's gospel catch a couple committing adultery, and they haul the woman from the bedroom to the streets where they ask Jesus about the law that says she should be stoned to death. We don't know what Jesus wrote on the ground. Tradition says he wrote the sins of those standing near. Just as they caught the woman, so Jesus catches them. In the crowd that day there surely were other women and men guilty of sins they thought were private.**

**When the crowd disperses, Jesus addresses the woman. In this short conversation, she who needs mercy talks with him who is mercy. He forgives, but he challenges her to a new way of life.**

**We confess our sins to God at the beginning of mass and especially in the sacrament of reconciliation. Whether our sins are public or private, confessing them expresses our sorrow, and hearing words of forgiveness grants us peace. We all have sins we hope no one will ever know, but when we make them known to God, Jesus is ready to forgive, even as he issues this command: "From now on do not sin any more."**