

Chapter 18: Confession

“God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself, and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (*Prayer of Absolution*)

Many examples of God’s mercy in O.T.

- * The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:4-9)

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul disobeyed God’s command to wipe out Amalek – prophet Samuel reproves him for his disobedience, not the first time – but Saul has convinced himself that he is doing the will of the LORD – but he’s not – and will blame God.

* “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.” (1 Sam. 15:22-23)

* David, a “man after God’s own heart” – ran a protection racket (1 Sam. 25), committed adultery with another man’s wife, and then had that man purposely killed in battle. (2 Sam. 11)

Jesus Forgave Sins

- * Woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1-11)
- * Pardoning of the sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50)
- * Healing of the paralytic (Mt 9:1-8)

But Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the ministry of the apostles, and in turn, the priests thereafter.

* Jesus, speaking to his disciples: “If another member sins against you ... Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. (Matt. 15:18)

* Jesus on Easter night: “... Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” (John 20:19-23)

Conversion, Confession, Forgiveness

Jesus forgave Peter - Jesus *would* have forgiven Judas...

Sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:32) has two dimensions: presumption and despair.

- * Presumption (the problem of this age) "I can't believe in a God who would/wouldn't _____"
- we become the judges of God, not the other way round
- * Despair – "no hope, my sin is too big for God to forgive" – I've made myself greater than God!

People love to confess, just watch Jerry Springer. Is that "Confession"? We have lost a sense of sin in this no-fault culture. Why do Catholics confess? There is no test of sorrow if we are the judge – sin is pride and the telling of it is humility. Next time you get stopped by a traffic cop, try just telling him "I'm sorry."

Liturgy of the Sacrament of Penance

Conviction – I admit...

Confession – I reveal...

Contrition – I express my sorrow...

Compensation – I fix what I broke...

Correction – I resolve...

Recognize Sin

* Christ without the cross is a man without a mission; the cross without Christ is a burden without relief.

* rationalizing our own evil – The Dictatorship of Relativism (Pope Benedict XVI) - Accepting blame is a sign of maturity. To be human means that, at times, we will make mistakes and commit sins. However, owning up to them quickly and candidly is pleasing to God *and* has a healing effect on our souls.

* Mortal and venial sins – 1 John 5:16-17 – Mortal sin needs: grave matter, your full knowledge, and your deliberate consent.

Prodigal son (pg 246)

A GUIDE TO CONFESSION

How to go to Confession

1. You always have the option to go to confession anonymously, that is, behind a screen or face to face, if you so desire.
2. After the priest greets you in the name of Christ, make the sign of the cross. He may choose to recite a reading from Scripture, after which you say: "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession. These are my sins."
3. Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. You might even want to discuss the circumstances and the root causes of your sins and ask the priest for advice or direction.
4. Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then make an Act of Contrition for your sins.
5. The priest will then dismiss you with the words of praise: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. You respond: "For His mercy endures forever." The priest will then conclude with:" The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."
6. Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible.

PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION

O most merciful God! Prostrate at your feet, I implore your forgiveness. I sincerely desire to leave all my evil ways and to confess my sins with all sincerity to you and to your priest. I am a sinner, have mercy on me, O Lord. Give me a lively faith and a firm hope in the Passion of my Redeemer. Give me, for your mercy's sake a sorrow for having offended so good a God. Mary, my mother, refuge of sinners, pray for me that I may make a good confession. Amen.

Chapter 19: Anointing of the Sick

Jesus is referred to in the early Church as the Savior – “salvator” in Latin – the term speaks of the one who brings healing – our English word “salve” has as its root “salvus” having to do with health.

Christ’s Compassion for the Sick

Jesus sometimes spoke – often touched – sometimes nothing at all

* Mark 3:7-12 – “... He told his disciples to have a boat ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush Him; for He had cured many so that all who had diseases pressed upon Him to touch Him.”

* Mark 6:7-13 – Jesus sent out the Twelve, and “...they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.”

* Luke 8:40-48 – Jesus on His way to heal Jairus’ daughter, and a woman who’d been suffering from hemorrhages for 12 years thought if she could just touch His cloak...

* Colossians 1:24 – what on earth is *lacking* in Jesus’ dying on the cross?!? Our participation!

Church Continues Christ’s Ministry of Healing

* James 5:14-15

A Sacrament of Healing

- * Penitential Rite
- * Liturgy of the Word
- * Prayers
- * Laying on of hands/anointing
- * Holy Communion/viaticum

Effects of the Sacrament

* Why doesn’t God always heal? “Consider Him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart ... Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? ... Now, discipline

always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Heb. 12:3, 7, 11)

* Philippians 1:20-24 – "My eager expectation and hope is that I shall not be put to shame in any way, but that with all boldness, now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I prefer. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit."

Importance of the Sacrament

* Strength to bear – we try to avoid suffering at ANY cost nowadays

* Euthanasia – more for our convenience so WE are not bothered or inconvenienced

Anyone who has ever experienced or witnessed illness knows how it makes a person feel helpless and vulnerable, sometimes leading to self-absorption and even anger against God. Ancient peoples saw sickness intertwined with sin and evil (read the book of Job). Even Jesus' disciples asked Him in John 9, when they passed by the man born blind, "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"