

Notes - The Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Peace of soul and friendship with God

Among the less frequented sacraments today there is certainly that of Confession. There are various reasons such as shyness, shame, but often two questions are also important:

- a) What's the point of confessing me, if I can do it alone?
- b) Why do I have to tell my sins to another person?

Before answering these two questions, I believe it is necessary to understand that Confession is a great opportunity given by Christ to prevent man from remaining in enmity with God, when he sins seriously against His will.

One does not get confessed due to a sense of guilt, as if, if we did not feel the "remorse of conscience", it would be legitimate to continue making mistakes. No. Confession has a purpose that of putting us back again in God's grace in order to walk in his peace and blessing. Therefore, it is not a mere "spiritual washing", but it is receiving the power of grace to avoid falling back into evil.

Having said this, I answer the two questions.

Can you be confessed by yourself? Certainly not, even if before the confession it is necessary that the penitent be aware of the gravity of the evil. In fact, a reasonable

amount of time is required to reflect on one's own failings, the unfulfilled good, the consequences of one's actions on others, etc. This is a previous and necessary moment to avoid that errors, over time, can be irrelevant to the conscience, thus accustoming the soul not to feel any contrition, in front of the supreme love and divine sanctity. This is why we must go to confession to the priest to ask God for forgiveness.

Why say my sins to another person? I answer by making an example. Imagine that, in the absence of water, a person, having the only fountain in the centre of the town, claims to have this only fountain at home. The need for water is for everyone and requires everyone to take a bucket, choose an appropriate time to walk towards the fountain, wait for their turn and then fill the bucket with water. Likewise, the Confession is similar to the fountain just described. The Lord wanted to put the water of forgiveness into the hands of his ministers: "To whom you will forgive sins will be forgiven". No one can claim to satisfy the thirst for forgiveness outside of this "sacramental source", that is, without the absolution that only priests are called to confer.

Even the Pope and the priests, to receive God's forgiveness, need to receive this absolution from other ordained ministers. Saying sins to a sacred minister does not represent a mortification but rather an act of great humility because it manifests the search for God's will, by listening to and welcoming every counsel of truth.

Therefore, I urge every Christian to choose a priest as a spiritual guide and to find the time to confess frequently.

Father Alessandro Carioti

So that you believe that Jesus is the Christ

The Apostle John writes his Gospel for one purpose: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of (his) disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (Jn 20: 30-32). He proclaims this same end in his First Letter: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life - for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete" (1Jn 1: 1-4).

The Son is the eternal life of the Father. Since eternity the Father has constituted him Mediator for the gift of everything that with his omnipotent Word he would have created outside of Him. With sin, man has lost the life received through Christ. The Father cannot give it back to man but through Him. There is no true life for us on our earth except for Christ, with Christ and in Christ. The Father does not know other givers of life, because He has constituted no one else the giver of his life and mediator of it. The Son is the only Mediator for creation, redemption, salvation, justification and glorious resurrec-

tion. Christ is excluded, there is no possibility either human or divine, either from heaven or from the earth, to return to life. One remains in death forever.

Just as Christ is the heart of the Father, of creation and of redemption, so He must be the heart of the Church and in the Church the heart of every one of his disciples, so that for the disciple He becomes the heart of every other man. If the Church loses, misplaces and neglects Christ, she loses, misplaces and neglects her own heart. Without heart the Church remains without life. This is also true for the Christian. If the Christian loses, misplaces and neglects Christ, he loses, misplaces and neglects his life. He is a Christian without his true heart. He is without real life. Without Christ as his heart, he is extinguished light, tasteless salt, truth without love, faith without hope, charity without true salvation, justice without forgiveness and without mercy, but also forgiveness and mercy without truth. The Church has only one goal to accomplish: defending, even at the price of life, Christ Jesus, salvation and redemption, the eternal life of humanity. The truth of the Church is the truth of Christ, just as her life is the life of Christ. Without Christ she becomes a Church without truth and without life. She becomes useless to the world. The world has everything. It only lacks Christ and his life. Either the Church gives Christ to the world, or her existence has no meaning. Mother of God, arrange so that the Christian never loses and never alters this mission.

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THE INTERNAL FORUM: "A STERILIZED ROOM" FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE WORLD

Reflections starting from the Speech of H.H. Francis
for the course of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the internal Forum (9.3.2018)

On the occasion of the XXIX Course on the internal forum, organized by the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Holy Father Francis reminded the participants that the ministry of the Confessor is an office that one is called to carry out with the authority of Christ and not with his own. Therefore, it is most necessary to remember that we are not "masters of consciences" (Speech), but instruments of God's mercy, in truth and in charity. Consciences do not belong to the priest and it is for this reason that no ordained minister can act arbitrarily against them. Moreover, if the priest himself does not belong to himself in that he is called to be a consecrated person, that is a separate from himself, from others and from the world, to belong only and uniquely to Christ the Supreme and Eternal Priest, even more so the souls do not belong to him, towards which he has a role of mediation in the gift of the truth and grace of Lord Jesus.

This is why "the colloquy of Sacramental confession must be seen as a privileged opportunity of meeting, to put both, penitent and confessor, listening to the will of God" (Speech). Priest and faithful are called to a relationship of dependence on the will of Christ the Lord. The penitent, on his part, must not impose his will on the confessor or claim to be justified in his choices when they are contrary to the divine will; the confessor must not arrogate himself the right to have a will of his own to be imposed on the penitent. In short, both must constantly be from the divine will.

In order for this to happen it is necessary for each one to live Confession - and the pos-

sible spiritual direction - with the right attitude that belongs to him: the confessor must be the voice of the Holy Spirit; the penitent must seek the will of God, knowing that only in it his life is. The confessor must listen to the painful cry of the penitent - born from sin - but he has the charity obligation of inviting him to return to obedience to the Word of the Lord; the penitent, if he desires that his wound be soothed and healed, must dispose himself to the radical conversion of the heart.

To use an image, we could say that the confessional must be like a "sterilized room" from human thought. Nothing contrary to the will of God must enter into it, to avoid interference between what is God's will and what is not. In this, the responsibility of the confessor is great, which must be vigilant so that only the divine thought is breathed into the internal forum.

The confessor is the guardian of God's will and to carry out this delicate task he must live the consecrated to the Lord in all his being: in thoughts, in the heart, in the soul, in the spirit and in the body. If he does not do it and lets himself be conquered by sin, he inevitably becomes the master of consciences and no longer their servant, because he ends up justifying evil rather than helping the penitent to defeat it.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help the confessors not to transform the internal forum into a cave of thieves, so that every sinner repented can always take refuge in the heart of your Son Jesus and find in it forgiveness and peace.

Father Giuseppe Carrabetta

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME
(Second Easter Sunday - Year B)

BORE WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION
(Acts 4,32.35)

The resurrection must be announced and witnessed for reasons of Christological essence. It is a historical event and as such it gives fullness of truth to the life of Christ the Lord. It ensures Jesus is the Different than every other man that came, comes and will come to our earth. Everyone comes, leaves and does not stay. Jesus came. He has passed through death. He has returned to us. He remains in history as the Immortal Living, the Lord of his Church and of the world, the Judge of the living and the dead. Jesus overcame death. Only He has overcome it. All the others lie in the sepulchres. He has overcome it in his body to give us his victory. If Christ is not risen, our faith is vain and our hope is vain. The resurrection must be announced because it reveals and cries that Christ Jesus is the true eternal Messiah with the eternal kingdom. There is no salvation except for him and in him. Announcing the resurrection is proclaiming our life.

WHO BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD (1Jn 5: 1-6)

Faith in Christ Jesus, Son of God, is the essence, the substance and the truth without which the Christian cannot exist. Christian is not he who believes in God, but he who confesses that Jesus is the Eternal Son of the Father, his Only Begotten, who became flesh to give every man grace and truth, light and life, in forgiveness of the sins for the redemption effected in his body. Christians are those who believe that Jesus is not only the Son of God, he is also his only Saviour, Redeemer, the one and only Mediator in creation, redemption, grace, truth and revelation

between the Father and humanity. Christians are those who believe that only in the name of Jesus it is established that we can be saved. No other name is given under the sky. A Christian is someone who confesses that Christ is salvation and it is fulfilled in him and through him and we live with him as his true body. Those who do not profess this most pure faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ are not Christians.

THAT YOU MAY (COME TO) BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (Jn 20,19-31)
If John has written the Gospel so that everyone can come to believe, walking the path of history, that Jesus is the Christ and believing he has life in his name, we must deduce that the whole mission of the Church and the life of every disciple of Jesus must have the same end. For the Church's mission, for the life of the Christian, for the concrete history of every disciple, the world must come to confess that true salvation is only in Christ and for Christ and it comes only from true faith in Him. Not a thing that is worked in the Church and in the Christian must ignore this single end. Dogmatism, ascetics, mystics, pastoral, moral and every other activity of mind and body must lead to faith in Christ the Son of God, to the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the true Son of the Father. If this faith is not reached, the evangelizing mission is lived badly, but also the whole life of Christians is also out of its primary end. Today Christ Jesus is the understood. It is taken for granted that He is at the centre of everything, while in truth He is cut off. Everything is done without Him, without the true faith in Him.

by the theologian, Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno