

Homily 30th Sunday Year C 2022

One of the greatest gifts is for us to know our sinfulness. This was a problem for the Pharisee who thought he had fellowship with God while walking in darkness. He was blind unlike the tax collector. The question raised is: have we lost a sensitivity to sin in our lives.

Today many more people go to Communion at Mass but far fewer use the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Although we know that because of God's mercy we do not always need to go to confession before receiving communion, many have not learnt the value and importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament is important not only for our individual lives but for the life of the whole community.

Sin can too easily be seen as a personal failure to meet certain behavioural standards: impatience, jealousy, anger but Sin is much more fundamentally a failure in relationships – with God, with other people, with oneself. We can sin against ourselves, with our family members, with our colleagues, with our friends, with total strangers, with people we never see but who have been affected by our love or our selfishness.

Sin is a failure in love, a failure to work for the well-being of others. Many of our worst sins are the things we fail to do. On judgement day the Lord will say: *"I was hungry, thirsty, lonely, struggling to get along, obviously in trouble – and you did not abuse me, attack me, get angry at me or hurt me. No, you did absolutely nothing at all! I was in desperate need and you walked by, away from me!"*

A deep awareness of sin does not separate us from God. On the contrary, it is a sign that God is very much part of our lives and that we wish to partake of the love he is offering us.

The Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday) liturgy speaks of the *felix culpa*, the "happy fault" when we crucified the Son of God. Many of our sins can be seen as a happy fault, if they help us to realise how weak we are, how much we depend on God's help and the help of other people. An awareness of our sins can also help us to be far more compassionate and understanding towards others in their sinfulness and weakness. In the depths of our sinfulness, we should never lose sight of the God who is always standing by ready to come at our merest signal asking for God's help. As it says in the First Reading, *"The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds... the Lord will not be slow in coming."*

Each Friday night after work, Bubba cooked a venison steak on his outside grill. However, all his neighbours were Catholic and faithfully observed the Friday abstinence. The delicious aroma from the grilled venison caused problems for the Catholic faithful so they told their priest. The Priest visited Bubba and suggested that he become a Catholic. After several classes and much study, Bubba attended Mass and after the priest sprinkled holy water over him, he said, *'You were born a Baptist, and raised a Baptist, but now you are a Catholic.'* Bubba's neighbours were greatly relieved, until Friday night arrived, and the wonderful aroma of grilled venison again filled the neighbourhood. The Priest was called and immediately rushed into Bubba's garden preparing to scold him. Then, he stopped in amazement.

There stood Bubba, clutching a small bottle of holy water which he carefully sprinkled over the grilling meat, chanting: *"You were born a deer, you were raised a deer, but now you are a catfish."*