

# FAITH AND REASON

## **The Five Paths of Repentance by St John Chrysostom, Bishop:**

"The paths of repentance are numerous and varied, and all lead to heaven.

A first path of repentance is the condemnation of your own sins: be the first to admit your sins and you will be justified. For this reason too, the prophet wrote: I said I will accuse myself of my sins to the Lord, and you forgave the wickedness of my heart. Therefore, you too should condemn your own sins; that will be enough reason for the Lord to forgive you, for a man who condemns his own sins is slower to commit them again. Rouse your conscience to accuse you within your own house, lest it become your accuser before the judgment seat of the Lord.

Another and no less valuable path is to put out of our minds the harm done to us by our enemies, in order to master our anger, and to forgive our fellow servants' sins against us. Then our own sins against the Lord will be forgiven us. Thus you have another way to atone for sin: for if you forgive your debtors, your heavenly Father will forgive you.

The third path consists of prayer that is fervent, careful and comes from the heart. The fourth path is almsgiving, whose power is great and far-reaching. If moreover, a man lives a modest, humble life that, no less than other things I have mentioned, takes sin away. Proof of this is the tax collector who had no good deeds to mention, but offered his humility [fifth path] instead and was relieved of a heavy burden of sins.

Thus I have shown you five paths of repentance: condemnations of your own sins, forgiveness of our neighbor's sins against us, prayer, almsgiving, humility.

Do not be idle, then, but walk daily in these paths; they are easy, and you cannot plead your poverty. For, though you live out your life in great need, you can always set aside your wrath, be humble, pray diligently and condemn your own sins; poverty is no hindrance. Poverty is not an obstacle to our carrying out the Lord's bidding, even when it comes to that path of repentance which involves giving money (almsgiving, I mean). The widow proved that when she put her two mites into the box. Now that we have learned how to heal these wounds of ours, let us apply the cures. Then when we have regained genuine health, we can approach the holy table with confidence, go gloriously to meet Christ, the king of glory, and attain the eternal blessings, through the grace, mercy and kindness of Jesus Christ, Our Lord."

## **I Was Hungry:**

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities club.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly and prayed for my release.

I was naked, and in mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick, and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless and you spoke to me of the shelter of God's love.

I was lonely, and you left me alone to go and pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God.

But I am still very hungry and lonely and old.

**Prayer:** You pray in your distress and in your need would that you might pray in the fullness of your joy and in the days of your abundance.

**Gratitude** involves a conscious choice. I can choose to be grateful, even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped on hurt and resentment. I can choose to be grateful, even when I am criticized, even when my heart responds in bitterness... Fr Henri M Nouwen

**Faith:** Homer, a thousand years before Christ, threw into the stream of history the mystery of a woman faithful in sorrow and loneliness. While her husband, Ulysses, was away on his travels, Penelope was courted by many suitors. She told them she would marry one of them when she finished weaving a garment. But each night she undid the stitches she had put in it during the day, and thus she remained faithful until her husband returned. No one who sang the song of Homer could understand why he glorified this sorrowful mother, as they could not understand why, in another poem, he glorified a defeated hero. It was not for a thousand years, until the day of a defeated hero on a Cross and a sorrowful Mother beneath it, that the world understood the mysteries of Homer.

**The Destiny of Those who were Called:** The destiny of those who were called, would henceforth be closely bound to that of Jesus. An Apostle is one who is sent, but even before that he is an "expert" on Jesus. This very aspect is highlighted by the Evangelist John from Jesus' very first encounter with the future apostles.....

The meeting took place on the banks of the Jordan. The presence of the future disciples, who, like Jesus, also came from Galilee to receive the Baptism administered by John, sheds light on their spiritual world. They were men who were waiting for the Kingdom of God, anxious to know the Messiah who's coming had been proclaimed as imminent. It was enough for John the Baptist to point out Jesus to them as the Lamb of God, to inspire in them the desire for a personal encounter with the Teacher. The lines of Jesus' conversation with the first two future Apostles are most expressive..... To the question "What do you seek?" they replied with another question: "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus' answer was an invitation: "Come and see". Come so that you will be able to see... The Apostles' adventure began as an encounter of people who are open to one another. For the disciples, it was the beginning of a first acquaintance with the Teacher, seeing where he was staying and starting to get to know him. Indeed, they were not to proclaim an idea, but to witness to a person.

Before being sent out to preach, they had to "be", with Jesus, establishing a personal, relationship with him. On this basis, evangelization was to be no more than the proclamation of what they felt and an invitation to enter into the mystery of communion with Christ... **Pope Benedict XVI**

### **A Thought for the Day During Lent**

**Sunday** The human heart, at whatever age, opens only to the heart that opens in return.

**Monday** The future starts today, not tomorrow.

**Tuesday** The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that He sends to us day after day.

**Wednesday** The devil fears hearts on fire with love of God.

**Thursday** All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.

**Friday** Anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall a soul except sin. God commands you to pray, but He forbids you to worry.

**Saturday** You don't know how to pray. Put yourself in the presence of God, and as soon as you have said, 'Lord, I don't know how to pray!' you can be sure you've already begun.

**Sharing:** We cannot share with others unless our lives are full of God's love and our hearts are pure. As Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God " Unless we are able to see God in our neighbor, it will be very hard for us to love"... **St. Mother Teresa**

**Prayer:** When the soul gives itself to prayer it is now like one to whom water has been brought, so that he drinks peacefully without labor, and is no longer forced to draw water through the aqueducts of past meditations and forms and figures. Then as the souls come before God, it makes an act of knowledge, loving, tranquil, passive, in which it drinks of wisdom and love, and delight...**St John of the Cross**

**Pure Love of God:** If you act out of pure love of God, you will not perform your actions to be seen by others. You will not even do them that God might notice them, If it were possible that your good works might escape God's attention, you would still perform them, with the same joy, and in the same pureness of love... **St John of the Cross: The Living Flame of Love**

**Few people realize how much of their happiness is dependent upon their work,** upon the fact that they are kept busy and not left to feed upon themselves. Happiness comes most to people who seek her least, and think least about it. Happiness is not an object to be sought; it is a state of mind. It must follow and not lead. It must overtake you, and not you overtake it. How important is health to happiness. Blessed is the man who has some work, some occupation in which he can put his heart, and which affords an outlet to all the forces that are in him.

**In His Will is Our Peace**

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