

# **SIN and REPENTANCE**

(1/24/06 Topic of Discussion)

Presented by Fr. Ed Jocson

**Mystery of Sin and Repentance: ([CCC#385-#421-The Fall](#)) *The time of God's grace and favor is indeed at hand. In response to the Good News and the gracious kindness of God, individuals and even whole communities can repent and return to God.* God created us as the best of His creations (Creation story: [Genesis chap 1 vs 26-31](#) and [Genesis chap 2 vs 18-25](#)). When man was created, creation was complete and perfect. We are created in the image of God to have a relationship, an inner life, with Him (see [CCC #355-384](#)). We are also created to have a relationship with each other and with a free will to choose. God is love; if you love God, you must also love others. ([1-John chap 4 vs 20-21](#)) "...If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar: for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother..."**

**But man falls. How did we go from perfection and trust to shame and distrust? ([Genesis chap 3 vs 1-24](#)) Man disobeyed God. (Think of a parent / child relationship). They did the one thing God asked them not to do. God wanted them to be as innocent as the day He created them. He did not want them to eat of the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Did God create us to fall? No. He created us perfect...to follow the will of God – obedience. It was Jesus' 'obedience' that brought us back to the Father.**

**The time of Jesus' coming is nearer every day. Every day we are nearer to it. We are not made for this world. Be ready to leave it all behind and follow Jesus when He calls ([1-Corinthians chap 7 vs 29-31](#)). We need to use this life of imperfection to get ready for the world of perfection.**

**We are called to repent – as individuals and as whole communities (Jonah's story). The power of God brought about the response of the people of Nineveh, their repentance and their radical new way/change of life. It was God's divine compassion and goodness that lead them, and leads all sinners, into the path of righteousness. We must**

remember that we must turn back and it is the Lord who initiates the turning back. He loves us so much that He wants us to choose to love Him back. It is healthy for us to have 'free will' so it is our decision, our choice, to love Him back. He did not want us to be puppets and do whatever He says; He wants us to love Him freely, our own choice.

Before Adam and Eve sinned they saw each other as the image of God. After their fall, they saw ... something else. They realized that what they saw in the other, the other saw in them and that is why they hid themselves. They no longer saw each other in the likeness and image of God but ... something else... and this made them ashamed and want to hide and cover themselves. They were still made in the image of God but because of their sin they were no longer perfect. We need to understand that we are the image of God and try our very best not to sin.

God desires to be with us but sin separates us. Reconciliation reconciles us to God. When we sin, we have to find our way back. There are no limits to God's mercy; therefore, deliberately refusing His mercy rejects His forgiveness and His salvation. Sinning and not believing that God forgives or refusing to turn back and reconcile that sin is sin against the Holy Spirit (see [CCC 1864](#)). We may find it almost impossible to forgive ourselves and we may find it just as impossible to believe that God forgives us. That is why Jesus came to reconcile us to God, to heal that relationship, to remove the shame and distrust. Trust was broken, the relationship was broken ... disobedience ... all sin is disobedience. It was/is not the act, the sin, but it is the broken relationship, the turning your back on God. Until you realize that what you lose by sinning is losing your relationship with God, you cannot understand His forgiveness. Because of Jesus we now have the choice to return to the Lord.

After the fall, the world is no longer perfect; it is wounded and scarred by sin. The tragic consequences of that first disobedience, which we call '*original sin*', include the destruction of the initial harmony of creation, the friction (broken relationships and distrust) experienced in human relationships, and the entrance of decay and death into the world. The human person (originally created by God as good) is impaired by sin and this flawed character continues to influence one's thoughts and actions. All too frequently we are drawn to what is

immoral, and by sinning we choose to turn away from God who is good. God healed us by sending His Son so we can get the back the relationship with Him. Man can never do enough to heal/repair the broken relationship, but Jesus can. This reparation...we do this in every Mass (and we even receive Him!).

**What is Sin?** (see [CCC 1846-1853](#)) Sin is that which offends reason, truth, and right conscience, and fails to love God and neighbor; it wounds us and impedes human solidarity; it is a word, action or desire contrary to God's law. Sin offends reason wounding us, others and our community. It is contrary to the laws of God, the Ten Commandments (see [CCC 2072-2074](#)) and the Precepts of the Church (see [CCC 2041-2043](#)). The Ten Commandments reveal grave obligations and are engraved by God in the human heart. The Precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life helping us in our journey returning to the Lord. They are nourishment needed to strengthen us in our journey. There are six Precepts: 1) to attend Mass on Sundays, 2) confess your sins (Reconciliation) at least once a year, 3) receive Holy Communion (Holy Eucharist) at least once during the Easter Season, 4) observe holy days of obligation and attend Mass, 5) fasting and abstinence on prescribed days, and 6) providing material needs of the Church (Stewardship).

Sin is personal, that is, our choice. It is something that the individual either commits or omits that represents a turning away from God. Sin is also social (see [CCC 408](#)). That is, the entire communal and social structure/institutions are in conflict with the laws of God.

**The Gravity of Sin:** (see [CCC 1854-1876](#)) There are two types of sin, mortal and venial. Mortal sin (called 'deadly') destroys charity in the heart (the very center of our being) by a grave violation to God's law (the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church) turning man away from God. Venial sin weakens charity creating disorder impeding the soul's progress in the practice of moral good. For a sin to be 'mortal', three conditions must be met together: 1) the object of the sin is a grave matter, 2) it is committed with full knowledge, 3) and done with full consent. It is in direct opposition to God. Unrepented and repeated venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. Mortal sin results in the loss of sanctifying grace and if not repented

can cause loss of heaven and result in the complete separation from God, which we call hell. Venial sin does not destroy charity even though it wounds it. It does not deprive sanctifying grace nor does it separate us from God or from eternal happiness, which we call heaven (see [CCC 1863](#)).

**The Grace of Repentance:** (see [CCC 1987-2016](#)) In light of the reality of the presence of sin and the struggle against it, God continues to call us back to full relationship out of love. He calls us back to love. God always initiates our turning back. Out of love, God sent Jesus Christ to free us from the bondage of sin. God is generous and merciful to us giving us every opportunity to repent and turn back to Him. Through the entire Church community, we are given support for ongoing conversion and growth in holiness (see CCC [1877-1889](#)). Our conscience, placed in us by God, helps us to recognize sin for what it is and to turn from it (see [CCC 1776-1796](#)). The outcome of repentance always exceeds our expectations. Blinded and calloused by sin, we only dimly perceive what God knows fully the love and goodness we are capable of and the joy that awaits us.

**Merit** (see [CCC 2006-2016](#))

***Final: “The time of God’s grace and favor is indeed at hand. In response to the Good News and the gracious kindness of God, individuals and even whole communities can repent and return to God.”***

**Man has fallen, but we have Jesus, each other and the whole Church community to help us reconcile.**

Submitted by  
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