

October 30, 2016

But Nobody Ever Told Me... XXXIV

Tradition is surprisingly fragile. Once a link of the chain is broken, it is extremely difficult to reattach—and if it effects a second link—almost impossible. What often happens in many disciplines is that an older generation assumes that the younger generation knows how and why certain things are done. We can see this in everything from sports practices to cooking recipes.

As we look to close out our observance of this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, we want to make certain that we sure up the fundamentals—that our resolutions to avail ourselves of the Mercy of God are effective and sustainable for the rest of our lives. To this end, we will be concluding with the very basic building blocks of a mature person—lessons that our parents drilled into us as children: the ability to say “I’m sorry” and “thank you”.

Last week we looked at St Thomas Aquinas’ reasoning behind the fact that Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Confession even though God can forgive our sins any way He wants to. Therefore, there must be more to the Sacrament!

Previously, we mentioned that as a result of Trauma, either by the Adversary’s clever deceit (or *our own need/desire* for answers/reasons), ***we come to believe lies about 1) ourselves (our goodness or lovability), 2) God, 3) all relationships, and 4) Love in general.*** We do not “tell” these lies, but we believe them and for the rest of our lives, unconsciously act out of them. That makes us complicit.

It is also important not to confuse moral culpability with sin. They are not the same thing. Sin has an objective reality with very real consequences. Remember the example of “Murder 1” vs Involuntary Manslaughter?

Things like resentment, jealousy, etc. are indeed *sins* as well as *feelings*. In fact, they can be *deadly* even if they are not consciously chosen(!) because they set a trajectory that may be difficult or even impossible to alter *due to their consequences*. It is possible (even common) for someone to commit sin and not be condemned to perdition because God knows our heart and intentions even if we are committing great evil.

There IS purification of our love that will be needed, though, because no matter what our intentions, love cannot be exercised and grow by committing sin however ignorantly.

So here is the problem: unless we are doing this kind of work *to get to the roots* of our habitual sins (the vast majority of which are compensation for these ailments) we find ourselves coming to Confession with the same list of sins time and time again. Is Christ’s Grace not effective then? Or is something wrong with our approach?

Next week we will sum up “I’m sorry” and begin “thank you”.

Fr. Michael