

# THE MYSTERY OF REPENTANCE

## 1. What is the Mystery of Repentance

### a) The RENEWAL of Baptism

- \* Baptism washed away the original corruption
- \* we fall into the corruption of sin, again, in the "wilderness" of this world
- \* Repentance = Metanoia = is THE BAPTISM OF TEARS

### b) The spiritual TREATMENT

- \* sin is a sickness of the soul
  - + can get worse, if not treated
  - + can lead to spiritual death
- \* Repentance = Metanoia = spiritual treatment & healing

### c) The RESTORATION of image

- \* sin is a mutilation, disfiguration of God's image in us
  - + the distortion of the evil one
  - + the "print" of the evil one
  - + makes us "opaque" spiritually
- \* Repentance = Metanoia = restoration

## 2. The Mystery of Repentance and the Holy Scripture

### a) The Mystery of Repentance was INSTITUTED by Christ

- \* Jesus performed it:
  - + "...your sins are forgiven thee..."
    - Luke 5, 20
    - Luke 13, 12
  - + He touched the people He was forgiving
    - Matthew 9, 28-29
    - Luke 13, 13
  - + He always healed both body and soul
  - + He did it even from the distance
    - Matthew 15, 28
- \* Jesus commissioned His Apostles to do it
  - + just before the Ascension
  - + they were called to make Him and His actions VISIBLE
  - + He was going to continue to do it invisibly
  - + John 20, 22-23
    - the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles specifically for this task
    - some were forgiven
    - some sins were retained
  - + this power was promised earlier
    - Matthew 18, 18
- \* the Mystery was believed and practiced by the Apostles
  - + as shown in:
    - Acts 19, 18
    - 1 Corinthians 4, 1

+ called for by John 1, 9

\* The Early Church clearly understood the above passages to be the basis for the Mystery of Repentance and emphasized the spiritual importance of this Mystery in many writings

### 3. It was meant to me a SPIRITUAL PROCESS not an empty ritual

#### a) The REALIZATION of sin

- \* the feeling of loss through sin
- \* the feeling of exile
- \* the knowledge that it cannot be repaired without God's help and intervention
- \* it is found in the Scripture:
  - + Luke 15, 17
  - + 2 Samuel 12, 13
  - + 2 Chronicles 33, 12

#### b) The CONTRITION of heart & the DECISION

- \* the grief of realization
    - + the inner struggle
    - + the re-kindling of the conscience
  - \* it is stirred up by grace
    - + John 6, 44
  - \* its natural consequence is the decision to change
    - + Luke 15, 18a
    - + 2 Corinthians 7, 9
  - \* unfortunately, some don't have it, like Judas
    - + Matthew 27, 4-5
  - \* must be preceded by serious focus on God and His:
    - + Love
    - + Mercy
    - + the examples of:
      - the prodigal son who remembered his father's infinite love
      - the Apostle Peter who remembered Jesus' love
- = see Matthew 26, 75

#### c) The CONFESSION of the sin and the COMMITMENT

- \* a dialogue with Jesus Christ, invisibly present
  - + Revelation 1, 5: "...the faithful witness..."
  - + the priest is only the icon of the invisible Lord
  - + publicly, in front of all the servants
    - see Luke 15, 18b
- \* talking about ourselves and our sins
  - + not about the people "who made us..."
  - + not about "circumstances which made us..."
  - + start by forgiving...

- + remembering how Adam and Eve made excuses instead of repenting
    - see Genesis 3, 8-13
  - \* confessing sin in all its stages
    - + thoughts
    - + passionate thoughts
    - + allowing the passionate thoughts to dwell in mind
    - + getting mind pleasure from thoughts
    - + approving the mind pleasure
    - + action
    - + repetition
    - + getting used to sin
  - \* understanding importance of commitment
    - + we can't guarantee
    - + we can bring desire and faith in God's help
    - + no commitment should lead to no absolution
- d) Finding the RIGHT MEDICINE
- \* the role of the presbyteros
    - + his faith and his example
    - + his knowledge of Scripture
    - + his understanding of human difficulties
    - + his love and compassion as co-servant of the Master
  - \* Scripture foundation:
    - + 1 Corinthians 5, 1-5
    - + 2 Corinthians 2, 7 & 1 Timothy 1, 20
    - + 1 Corinthians 5, 9-12
    - + Leviticus 13-14
  - \* different kinds of medicine:
    - + forgiving to be forgiven
      - Matthew 5, 23-25
      - 1 John 2, 9-11 & 4, 20-21
    - + the way of humbleness
    - + the reading of the Scripture
    - + the almsgiving
    - + the prayer for those who hate us
    - + Fasting
- e) The ABSOLUTION and LIVING UP to commitment
- \* God is the only One who forgives, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit
    - + Luke 5,21 & Luke 15, 22-24
    - + He poured out love and mercy on the Cross
  - \* the unworthy priest forgives as an icon
    - + the visible priest makes visible the High Priest
    - + through the power given to the Apostles and passed down through Apostolic Succession
    - + through the prayer of the Church
    - + through the touching
    - + responding to our human need to:
      - hear and be touched

\* living up to our commitment

- + a process begins and must continue
- + the need for spiritual planning
- + the need for spiritual discipline
- + the help of the Mystery of the Eucharist
- + the next confession, the test of the previous