

The Repentance as Love

It is true that many of us may read books of religious content, go to Church often, go to Confession, and receive Holy Communion on a regular basis. However, we seem not to repent in reality and in deed. Why is that? Why don't we truly change? **Why do some of the so called "church people" find it so hard to sincerely repent?**

Today, I would like us to think about **Repentance with Love as its content**. We have read and heard much about repentance and love. Both are very important components of our spiritual life.

We say **metanoia**, and tears of repentance come to mine; the mourning according to the Lord; the fruits produced by a repentant soul. We say **agape**, and sacrifice comes to mind; the disposition to philanthropy; the service to our fellow human being.

How is it that these two concepts **Metanoia and Agape**, Repentance and Love are almost identical?

Our experience both from ourselves and from our brothers and sisters indicates that **the way people repent is very similar to the way people love**. Thus, we observe that people who are capable of deep love can repent equally deeply. On the contrary, **people who find it difficult to love, also find it difficult to repent**.

The **Parable of the Prodigal Son** is a classical example. The elder son comes across as a person with no magnanimity whatsoever. He believes that he is superior to the younger son. He becomes jealous, because his father—God, in reality—accepts the younger son with mercy and love. This shows that the elder brother—the supposedly "good Christian"—has no love in him. And since he has no love, he has no repentance!

The younger brother, the prodigal one, has repentance in him, because he has love. We can understand that our second example; the story of **the Saint Mary the Egyptian**. Mary the Egyptian, who was a prostitute, spent many years in sin and in acts pleasurable to the body, just like the prodigal son did. However, near the end of her life, she leaves for the desert, she repents, she confesses, she receives Communion. These acts show us how capable of true love she is. Her former love for the pleasures of the flesh is now transformed into love for God. What sanctifies Mary the Egyptian is NOT her long and strict fasting. It is rather the fact that her passion for ephemeral pleasures is converted into true love.

In rewarding sanctity status our Church does NOT count someone's days of fasting, or the number of times he or she kneels to the ground. Our Church DOES take into account the efforts and spiritual exercises required for someone to reach the state of complete and unconditional love. Whoever can love truly, can also repent truly.

Therefore, repentance must be motivated by love.

My beloved brothers and sisters:

Many of us do not want, or rather do not dare look at ourselves and face the shadows and the demons residing within us. **We don't want to see the Hades we hide inside us.**

So, why don't we repent truly and verify? To answer this question sincerely, we must admit that we do not love God and our fellow human beings with all our might. We often simply TALK about these concepts, but we are not willing to put them to practice.

In conclusion, we can say that when repentance is grounded in love, it is the beginning of the Kingdom of God. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. **Whoever truly loves, also repents truly. AMEN.**