

30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Luke 18:9-14

Many people ask why we must confess our sins before a priest instead of confessing them directly to God. As social beings we have a desire to be with one another and we seek comfort in each other and so Christ gave the power to absolve sins to priests so that in the person's relationship with the priest men and women would feel the human touch of divine forgiveness and be assured by the priest's words, "I absolve you from your sins," that their sins are really and truly forgiven and that they are now a renewed creation before God. Without the consolation of those words spoken by a man in the name of Christ can anyone be assured that they are forgiven? I so often ask God for an answer to my prayers and what answer could be more reassuring than words spoken personally to me?

In our submission to the priest in the confessional and to his guidance and judgment I recognise that I cannot justify myself, that I am not all that I need, and I admit my reliance on God. Our faith is not a matter of morals or of simply doing what is right. It is a matter of relationship with God, knowing that we often make mistakes, and sometimes we make dreadful mistakes, and that we need the Lord's encouragement—His grace—to keep us going, and more than that, to grant to us the fullness of life that He promised. Pope Benedict XVI, said: "We are told two things about God: on the one hand, that He manifested Himself and that He shows us the right path to take; on the other, that God is a God who listens, who is close to us, answers us and guides us. With this we also come to the topic of purity: His will purifies us, His closeness guides us."

There is nothing that Our Lord cannot heal. No matter what we have done or said, no matter how we have savaged our own lives or torn at the lives of

others. That is the whole point of the resurrection; that even death itself was not enough to stop God from drawing life out of death.

God has created us in His image and likeness and has destined us for His glory. We are greater than we know but too often that greatness is manifested as arrogance and conceit. When the priest pours the water into the wine at the altar he says: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity." God came down to earth and became man so that He could take us up to Heaven. If only we would trust in Christ's mercy and seek Him out in confession, then we would begin to know what this means.