

Go Deep!

Session 8

“A Living Sacrifice...”



Luke 9: 22 – 27

“[Jesus] said, ‘The Son of Man must *suffer greatly* and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be *killed* and on the third day be raised.’

Then he said to all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, he must *deny himself* and *take up his cross daily* and *follow me*. For whoever wishes to *save his life* will *lose it*, but whoever *loses his life for my sake* will *save it*. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet forfeit himself?

Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when He comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”



1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

“ You know that while all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, the award goes to one man. In that case run so as to win! Athletes deny themselves all sorts of things. They do this to win a crown of leaves that withers, but we a crown that is imperishable. I do not run like a man who loses sight of the finish line. I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. What I do is discipline my body and master it...”



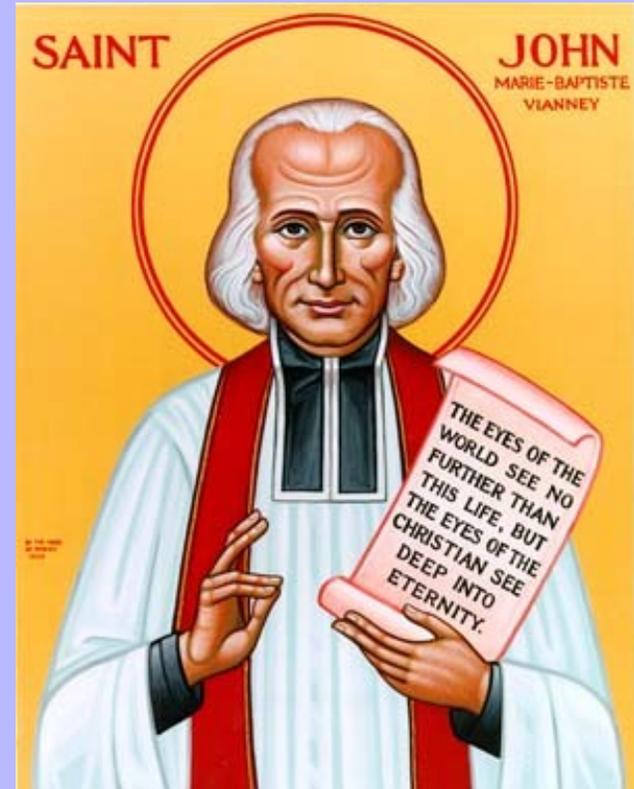
Why are we called to do penance?

- ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, he must *deny himself* and *take up his cross daily* and *follow me.*” **Luke 9:23**
- “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as *a living sacrifice*, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.” **Romans 12: 1**
- “The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is *no* holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the *ascesis* (penance) and *mortification* that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes...” **CCC 2015**



“On the path of penance only the *first step* costs...but what heroism and what grace are required to make a man take that first step and then to lead him to the heights of so difficult a virtue!”

St. John Vianney



What is Catholic Penance?

“Mortification” – (syn. *Penance*) Comes from the Latin word for “*Death.*”

“Metanoia” – (Greek) Conversion OR Penance



Interior & Exterior Penance

Interior penance –the conversion of heart and radical reorientation of our whole life to God.
(CCC 1430, 1431)

Exterior penance – external acts of penance one accepts from Divine Providence or performs of one's own accord. **(CCC 1434)**



“A Golden Treatise of Mental Prayer”
St. Peter of Alcantra

“Three things to do if you want to advance a long way in a short time”

1. Austerity and Mortification of the Flesh
2. To be intent on *interior* mortification
3. To be intent *unceasingly* on prayer



“A Golden Treatise of Mental Prayer”

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Also we must:

“Guard our senses, especially the eyes, the ears and the tongue” and “our heart and our imagination.”



Exterior Penance (Involuntary)

Accepting all sufferings “beyond our control” with humility and love (even joy) without complaining.



St. John Vianney

“To suffer lovingly, is to suffer *no longer*. To flee from the cross is to be crushed beneath its weight. We should pray for the *love* of the cross – then it will become sweet. I experienced it myself during four or five years. I was grievously calumniated and contradicted. Oh! I did have crosses, almost more than I could bear. Then I started praying for a love of crosses and I felt happy. I said to myself: ‘Verily, there is *no* happiness *but* in the cross.’”

“What? The cross make us lose our inward peace? Surely it is the *cross* that *bestows it* on our hearts. *All* our miseries come from our *not* loving it.”



The Three Forms of Voluntary Exterior Penance

Temperance = “Holy Moderation,” eating and drinking within the limits of what is essential for us to maintain health. It avoids overindulging our sensual appetites or taking inordinate pleasure in created “goods.” CCC 1809

Fasting – Abstaining from what is *usual* for us to eat.

“Black Fast” – Fast of bread and water

“Church Fast” (“Ecclesial Fast”) – One “normal” meal and two lesser meals which together do not equal the full meal, with no snacking in between.



The Three Forms of Voluntary Exterior Penance

Second – *Curtailment of Sleep*

Third – “*Chastisement of the Body*”

“My friend, the devil is not greatly afraid of the [whip] and other instruments of penance. That which beats him is the curtailment of one’s *food, drink and sleep*. There is *nothing* the devil fears more, consequently, *nothing* is more pleasing to God...” **St. John Vianney**



“The bond between [Christ and the Cross] is indissoluble, their union is eternal. Never the Cross without Jesus, or Jesus without the Cross.” ***St. Louis de Montfort***

“May I glory in *nothing* save the cross of Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world.”
Galatians 6:14.



What is the goal of Penance?

1. Fortify our prayer and bring us the grace of God.

*“Prayer joined to sacrifice and suffering is of *special* value. Suffering, lived in one's own body as a completion of what is lacking "in the sufferings of Christ, for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1: 24), becomes a very effective form of intercession.” 41st World Day of Prayer for Vocations in May 2004, **John Paul II***



What is the goal of Penance?

2. To Atone or make *Reparation* for Sin

- We do not “earn” our salvation by penance. We cannot “save ourselves.”
- Our penance *enters into* the supreme sacrifice of Christ and makes *some* satisfaction for our sins (“at-one-ment”).
- See **CCC 2487**
- “...In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings for Christ for the sake of His body the Church. **Colossians 1:24**



What is the goal of Penance?

“...the Church is continually being built up spiritually as the Body of Christ. In this Body, Christ wishes to be united with every individual, and in a *special way* He is united with those who suffer. For, whoever suffers in union with Christ... not only receives from Christ that strength already referred to but also "completes" by his suffering "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.”

This evangelical outlook especially highlights the truth concerning the *creative character of suffering*. The sufferings of Christ *created* the good of the world's redemption. This good in itself is inexhaustible and infinite. No man can add *anything* to it. But at the same time, in the mystery of the Church as his Body, Christ has *in a sense opened* His own redemptive suffering to all human suffering.”
(John Paul II - Salvifici Doloris, 24)



What is the goal of Penance?

“In so far as man becomes a sharer in Christ's sufferings—in any part of the world and at any time in history—to *that extent* he in his own way completes the suffering through which Christ accomplished the Redemption of the world.

...Does this mean that the Redemption achieved by Christ is not complete? No. It only means that the Redemption, accomplished through satisfactory love, remains always open to all love expressed in human suffering. In this dimension—the dimension of love—the Redemption which has already been completely accomplished is, in a certain sense, constantly being accomplished. Christ achieved the Redemption completely and to the very limits but at the same time he did not bring it to a close...” (John Paul II - Salvifici Doloris, 24)



What is the goal of Penance?

- 3. Most importantly, penance assists us in turning away from all sin, both mortal and venial.*



Five Keys to Practicing Authentic Catholic Penance

1. All Catholic Christian Penance must be centered on *Jesus Christ and His Cross*, be motivated by *humility* and *love* and *soaked in prayer* or it is not Catholic penance (see CCC 1436-37 & 1 Cor. 2:2)



Five Keys to Practicing Authentic Catholic Penance

2. Rather than offer our penances and sacrifices *to* Jesus, we should take care to offer them *with* Jesus. Penance is not about what *we do*, but what God does *in and through us*.

“I wish to know *Christ* and the power flowing from His resurrection; likewise to know how to share in *His* sufferings by being formed into the pattern of *His* death.” ***Philippians 3:10***



Five Keys to Practicing Authentic Catholic Penance

3. We should not take on any penance which we cannot perform with love and with joy.

“Take advantage of little sufferings, even more than of great ones. God considers not so much what we suffer as how we suffer. To suffer a great deal, but badly, is to suffer like the damned; to suffer much, even bravely, but for an evil cause, is to suffer as a disciple of the devil; to suffer little or much for God's sake is to suffer like a saint.” ***St. Louis de Montfort***



Five Keys to Practicing Authentic Catholic Penance

4. The penance we do of our own accord should *never* hinder our ability to perform our necessary duties *well* and *faithfully* or injure our health.

“... For instance my children, here is a person who has to do a day’s work. She has an idea of performing great penances, to spend half the night in prayer; if she is well instructed she will say to herself: ‘No, I must not do these things or I shall not be fit to do my duty tomorrow: I shall be sleepy, and the least thing will make me irritable; I shall be cross all day; I shall not do half the work I should have done had I had a night’s rest.’ A well instructed person always has two guides: counsel and obedience.”

St. John Vianney



Five Keys to Practicing Authentic Catholic Penance

5. Find a solid, wise and learned spiritual director and obediently heed their advice.

“For my part I say one out of *ten thousand*, for there are fewer than one would think capable of this task. He must be full of love, wisdom and prudence; for if either of these three be lacking there is danger. I tell you once again, ask such help of God [in other words pray that God will send you this person], and when you have found it, bless His Holy Name; be steadfast, seek no more, but go on simply, humbly and trustfully, for you are safe to make a prosperous journey.”

St. Francis de Sales



Letter to the “Friends of the Cross”

“ Friends of Jesus Christ, drink of His bitter cup and your friendship with Him *will* increase. *Suffer* with Him and you will be *glorified* with Him. Suffer *patiently* and your *momentary* suffering will be changed into an *eternity* of happiness. Make no mistake about it; since incarnate Wisdom had to enter Heaven by the Cross, *you* also must enter by the *same* way.

True wisdom is not to be found in the things of this world nor in the souls of those who live in comfort. He has fixed his abode in the Cross so *firmly* that you will not find Him anywhere in this world save in the *Cross*. He has so *truly* incorporated and united Himself with the Cross that in all truth we can say: *Wisdom is the Cross, and the Cross is Wisdom.*”

St. Louis de Montfort



The Goal of Penance in Summary

“It is no longer *I* who live, but *Christ* who lives *in me.*” ***Galatians 2:20***

See you at the Final Session of the
Summer – ***August 19th***



The Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the cross of Christ and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, the salvation of souls, reparation of sin, the intentions of my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. *Amen*

