

Repentant Heart

by Metropolitan Paul Saliba

The beginning of a grace-given Christian life is established in Baptism, but few people preserve this grace for long. Most Christians lose it.

Our Church offers the Sacrament of Confession for our healing. If any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, whom is Jesus Christ. -(1 John 2:1)- So, if you have sinned, then acknowledge your sin and repent.

In some people, the gift of grace-filled life, which was already received and acting in them through Baptism, is only cleansed and rekindled by means of the Sacrament of Confession. In this case, Confession, is a radical change for the better, a sudden change of will, turning away from sin towards God, a rekindling of the fire of fervent desires for the exceptional pleasing of God.

Within the repenting person there is sometimes a sense of fear, sometimes a slight hope, sometimes a keen sense of his own deep pain. All these feelings make a man feel as if he were a decomposing corpse, as if he were departing from this life, but with the hope of receiving new life. This state of being is painful but salutary. It is unavoidable but for one who has not experienced such a painful change has not yet begun to live through repentance. There is no hope that a man might overcome himself and begin to cleanse himself from all his impurity without having first passed this furnace of repentance.

The resolute, fervour, and active resistance to sin can come only from hatred of sin. Hatred of sin comes from an experience of harm that is produced by sin. The feeling of harm from sin is experienced in all its might during this painful change through repentance. Only at this point does a man feel with all his heart, how great an evil sin is. Such change for the better and turning to God must be, as if it were, instantaneous and indeed this is so. The person passes through several preparatory stages during which his freedom is united with grace. In this stage, grace gradually takes possession of freedom, while freedom submits itself to grace. These stages are necessary for everyone. Some people pass through them quickly and for others it take years.



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