



Day 23: Repentance

Jesus Calls Us to Repentance

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” Mark 1:15

In His purity of heart, Jesus was always oriented to God and always living in His Father's presence. His eyes, His heart, His body, and His soul were always and everywhere oriented to His Father. The relationship that He has with His Father is the gift that He wants to give us, and this happens through His call to repentance. The Catechism defines repentance as the “radical reorientation of our whole life,” to God (CCC 1431). So important was this necessity to repent that the first words out of Jesus' mouth in the Gospel of Mark was to repent and believe in the gospel (cf. Mark 1:15). There was an urgency to this invitation as Jesus knew the minds and hearts of His children were disoriented and distracted. In other words, they were not ready to receive the truth He came to bring. What is quite powerful was that it was not just a demand, but an invitation to come and be in relationship with Him. Repentance was not just to say “no” to all sorts of worldly things, but to say “yes” to a new relationship with God in the person of Jesus. As we turn to Jesus, we learn in His presence what a radical orientation to God looks like. We learn to “turn around” and believe in the gospel.

Mary, Always Turned to God

Repentance is to let go and radically turn back to God. Mary's whole life was a constant letting go and looking to the One who promised to give her everything. While Mary did not have to let go of sin, she still had to let go of questions, understanding, plans, and even expectations in the face of her vocation and call. She was always letting go and turning to God. While Jesus was also protected from sin, the orientation of Mary's heart to God had to have been a great comfort to Jesus as He was finding His way and facing the world around Him. Mary constantly led Jesus to find a secure foundation in proximity to the Father, a place where sons flourish and thrive.

St. Juan Diego and Us

You are made for more. St. Juan Diego clearly held doubts in his life's purpose, his worth, his mission; he expressed to Our Lady that life is merely a period of waiting for the “painful labor of death” (*Nican Mopohua*, 114). This idea permeated his culture as people faced the reality of death and suffering without meaning or purpose as many pre-Columbian

poems expressed this sentiment: "Where are we going?/Only to be born have we come/.../I suffer, I never reach my happiness, my joy/perhaps I have come only to labor in vain?/This is not the region where things are done/Certainly nothing green is here/Joylessness opens its flower" (*Cantos y Cronicas del Mexico Antiguo*, pp 159-160) God shows us in St. Juan Diego that truly we are never alone, and that God has a purpose for us and our lives today! Brother, it is time for us to repent of mediocrity, of coasting, of waiting around for death, or even of "just trying to get to heaven." You are made for more. Repentance unlocks the door that prevents us from going deeper with the Lord. What is still in the way of you more deeply living as a son before God? Maybe it is, for most of us, repenting and letting go of sin in our lives, especially through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Maybe it is repenting of lukewarm love, or disbelief in God's plan and purpose in a season of grief and suffering. Whatever it may be, there is a beautiful invitation to let go and turn to God. Despair has no place here – the Lord has greater plans for you. In this turning, He will provide and give us everything we need to be faithful sons. He merely asks us for our humble yes and our humble letting go.

Prayer

O Jesus, we adore You, we love You, and we thank You for the gift of Your presence. While having no need to repent, You show us what it looks like to be detached from worldly things and have our hearts be completely oriented to Your Father in heaven. We ask You now to hear this prayer.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God and Mother of us, draw us close to your heart. As you helped St. Juan Diego to let go of his own plans and be obedient to God, help us to have the courage to repent and let go of our sins and anything that stands in the way of us living in our beloved sonship.

Amen.

After reading today's reflection, [pray the Litany of Restoration of Sonship](#).