

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Frequent Confession

“Thy faith has saved thee” (Luke, 17:19)

On several occasions in the course of His public ministry Our Divine Lord used His miraculous power to cure persons afflicted with the loathsome disease of leprosy. Such cures were a convincing proof that His teaching was approved by the all-truthful God, since in those days there was no known natural cure for this terrible malady. Once a person was recognised as a leper, he was forced to leave his home and live in the caves or forests, with no relief to hope for except death. Hence, when Our Lord restored a leper to health, it was evident that He had performed a miracle, and that the seal of divine truth was placed on His doctrines.

Beyond doubt Our Saviour intended these miracles to be a symbol of a far greater miracle He planned to perform in behalf of human souls by establishing a means for cleansing sinners from the leprosy of their sins. This miracle was to be performed, not once or a few times, but on innumerable occasions in the course of the centuries. The means which Christ intended to establish was the sacrament of Penance, whereby Catholic priests, through the authority of Our Divine Redeemer, were to absolve repentant sinners and restore them to the spiritual health of sanctifying grace.

Perhaps He meant to give an indication of the sacrament of Penance when He said to the lepers: ***“Go, show yourselves to the priests.”*** The Jewish priests were authorised to judge whether or not a person was afflicted with leprosy; and when they decided that one was freed from this disease, he could associate again with his fellow men. Similarly, Christ appointed the priests of His Church judges of men's souls, empowered to forgive sinners and to restore them to full membership in His Mystical Body.

It must have been a source of supreme joy to these lepers when they found themselves cured. They were again allowed to dwell with their loved ones, in the fullness of health. So, too, the sinner who has gone to confession and received absolution should rejoice that his soul is again clean and pure, endowed with the beautiful quality of sanctifying grace. Again he may join his brethren in the faith at the communion-rail. And Our Lord has made no restriction as to the number or the gravity of the sins that can be forgiven through the sacrament of Penance. Even if a sinner falls many times after confession, Christ will pardon him again if he is truly repentant.

Practical Application

Are you among those Catholics who go to confession only once or twice a year? If you were afflicted with a bodily ailment, you would not hesitate to seek a remedy. Why then should you not seek health of soul in the sacrament of Penance frequently?