

## Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

In today's readings we see two things clearly demonstrated for us: man's sinful nature and the Merciful Love of Jesus.

We see man's sinful nature in the story of David, his desire for Bathsheba led him to commit murder by sending Uriah the Hittite into a non-winnable situation; basically a suicide mission.

David did not wield the sword himself, but he wanted his death, wished for it even though he knew it was a grave sin, a mortal sin...

But when the Prophet Nathan reminds David how much the Lord had done for him and how completely he turned his back on God just to fulfill a worldly desire. These words show David how far he has fallen and he confesses his sins and God told David through Nathan that His sins were removed.

In the second reading St Paul speaks of "justification". 'Justification' in St Paul's letter means an interior purification by which a man's sins are utterly blotted out and he is made acceptable to God in virtue of faith with charity, and good works.

In this reading he is telling us to put our faith of redemption and salvation in Jesus rather than on just following the rules. The reason this was necessary was because the Pharisees, Scribes and others had become so focused on the "rules" that they had forgotten about charity, about doing what God wanted us to do, they forgot why the "rules" were there to begin with.

It is in allowing God into our hearts and living for him and not just for own pleasures and amusements that we will find God and through Him, our salvation.

Our Gospel reading today is an especially powerful one. We see a woman who turns to Jesus in faith and love. A woman who has led a sinful life but is able to see Jesus for who He is and is brought to repentance because of it.

She comes to Jesus in a very humble way, placing herself at His feet. She realizes who He is and this in turn makes her realize what her sin has done to her.

As she anoints his feet she weeps. Her recognition of his greatness brings to light how far she has fallen.

She then wipes His feet with her hair. This is something that I think must have moved Jesus in a particular way because in those times this was something the slaves of the very powerful and rich would do. It was a sign of her submission and surrender to God.

We see Jesus' divine nature revealed in his ability to know men's thoughts and what was in their hearts when he addresses the Pharisee.

He uses the question about the two debtors to make a comparison between the Pharisee and the woman. Since the Pharisee sees himself as righteous he doesn't think he needs to be

forgiven of much, or indeed at all, and his actions show it. The actions of the woman on the other hand show that she knows she is a sinner and is in need of God's mercy. She knows how much she owes God and just how little she can pay back on her own. But she does the best she can and offers what is possibly her most prized possession, the jar of perfumed ointment and something even more valuable ... her love and contrite heart.

Jesus points out that the woman has acted as more of a host to Him than the Pharisee has.

She has shown him the dignity of an honored guest,

Has shown him love by anointing his feet with oil and has shown Him humility instead of arrogance.

Jesus then tells the woman that her faith has saved her.

In his radio message on October 26, 1946 Pope Pius XII stated that "Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin."

The sense of sin, the sense of what is right and what is wrong, what is pleasing to God and what is not.

This sense of sin is easy to lose, it is easy to stop seeing things as sinful, to fall into the trap of thinking "you do whatever you want to do and I'll do what I want to do" instead of what is right and good.

This sense of sin can be viewed as a safeguard for our souls.

By being aware of sin and its disastrous effects on our soul and our relationship with God we are less inclined to commit sins.

But once that restraint is gone, our pride can drive us to think more of ourselves than others, and even perhaps more than God.

We see in the actions of the Pharisee the dangers of pride, arrogance and injustice; these come from a loss of the sense of sin and of forgetting who and what we are and who created us.

The result of the loss of the sense of sin is like the failure of the cooling system of a nuclear power facility. At first the effects are minor, barely noticeable, but with alarming speed the heat and energy build up to critical levels and the result is a catastrophic explosion.

What starts as small things in our lives, small venial sins, become bigger and bigger until they become too big to handle.

Too big for us certainly and perhaps, in our minds, even too big for God. We ask ourselves "Who am I to ask God's forgiveness?" We tell ourselves "He could never forgive the things I've done" or "He couldn't love me, I've done too many bad things."

We become too afraid or embarrassed to go to confession and things continue to get worse in our hearts. Perhaps we even stop coming to Mass or stop talking to God or thinking about him completely. We become trapped in depression or despair.

Jesus, of course, does not want this for us and has fortunately provided us with a good example of how to correct this type of thinking in the person of the woman in today's Gospel.

In her we see a woman who realizes her sinfulness and places herself below others and humbly accepts her state and is therefore drawn to God and seeks his forgiveness.

And just as we have seen with David and the woman in the Gospel reading, our sins too can be forgiven if we go to God with a truly humble and repentant heart.

In a few minutes we will present ourselves before God when we receive the Eucharist.

During that time I invite you to remember all God has done for you and ...

How much He loves you wants to come into your hearts and help you live with Him now and forever.