

**Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time – C – 2022**  
**Sir. 35. 15- 17, 20-22///2 Tim.4.6-8,16-18///Luke 18.9-14**

→story is told about a young priest becoming the associate pastor of a rather large suburban parish

→after several months...the pastor of the parish sat down with the young associate to review his performance

→the pastor said that the young priest had been a true blessing for the parish...because of him...attendance was up....collections were increasing...and the youth of the parish were becoming more active.

→...the pastor even said that he was amazed that more people seem to be coming to confession because of the young associate...then surprisingly the pastor said...that even though people coming to confession was increasing....he was disappointed with the young priest in this area

→now the young priest....startled at this statement....replied that he would have thought that the pastor would be pleased that more people were approaching and coming to the confession...and so when the associate asked the pastor why he was disappointed the pastor said....

→it wasn't that he was disappointed that more people were coming to confession, his disappointment was in **the way** in which people were coming....

→you see the young associate had built a drive through confessional booth in the parking lot with the advertisement: ***“toot and tell, or go to hell!”***

→now I have never heard of a drive through confessional....and I hope to never see one...but there is a connection between the young associate pastor's ingenuity and the story we just heard

→today's gospel story is about repentance...true and sincere repentance and in it we hear about two people...a Pharisee and a tax collector

→now the Pharisee sets himself apart from everyone else...and sanctimoniously shows his arrogance and pride

→he proclaims that he is better than and above everyone else, and is not in need of God's mercy...

→then we hear about the humble tax collector...he knows he is a sinner ...and... much like all of us....in humility he asks for God's mercy...

***“O God...be merciful to me a sinner.”***

→and so in a word...our lesson today is about...true, authentic, and sincere repentance

PAUSE

→repentance has been described.... ***“as being sorry enough to want to quit whatever we have been doing wrong”*** (REPEAT!)

→but I would suggest that repentance goes beyond that

→because you see.....it's not only about being sorry enough to want to quit whatever we have been doing wrong....it's also about being sorry enough to make up for all the wrong that we have done

→being sorry enough to make amends...correct...and heal ourselves of the wrong we have committed

→there once was a little boy visiting his grandmother and she asked him what he would like for breakfast..... “pancakes” he replied

→then he added that at home he was allowed to eat only three pancakes...so he asked his grandmother if he could eat as many as he wanted

→the grandmother said... “sure”....and so after the boy had finished a dozen pancakes...his grandmother noticed he had an unhappy look on his face...she asked, “what was wrong....don’t you want any more pancakes?”

---and her grandson said.... “no...I don’t want any more pancakes...I don’t even want the ones I’ve already eaten!”

→you see....that is what repentance is .....not only being sorry enough to want to quit, but also being sorry enough to wish that we hadn’t done what we’ve already did....

→none of us live a perfect life....

→we have our faults and disappointments

→our attitudes and rough edges

→we get mad, we get even, --- we gossip, hold grudges, and often allow bitterness to get the best of us

→but there is also part of us that knows when we have done something wrong...when we need to say I’m sorry and we when we need to try to be better...

→someone once said to me...that they wished life was like a notebook where we could tear out the parts where we’ve made mistakes and throw them away

→and the more I thought about it...the more that image makes sense  
...because...when you think about it, thanks to Christ and his coming on this earth..... thanks to his death on the cross...---and to his loving us unconditionally

→he has bestowed his forgiveness to us...the same forgiveness that hopefully we will bestow and share with each other [as well]

PAUSE

→in a certain sense....thanks to Christ's presence in our lives and world...life IS like a notebook...we can tear out the parts where we've made mistakes and throw them away....by saying, *"I'm sorry, O God...be merciful to me a sinner."*

→we can seek repentance and forgiveness....and....more importantly we can share that forgiveness with those who ask it from us

→and that is the message of today's gospel story....

→we are truly forgiven by God when we embrace and accept repentance in our lives....

→when that happens...it means that we are serious about changing the way we live

→and so....perhaps [then] the real problem today .....is that.... these days we rarely think about....let alone.....seek and embrace repentance in our lives

PAUSE

→yet the good news we hear today .....tells us that we have been given the gift of repentance

→that even though we do things that are wrong....we have the capacity, potential and the power to repent

→to let go of the anger and bitterness, the grudges and hurt we harbor against one another

→to let go of the pettiness, and selfishness we sometimes have....

→to let go of all the things that bring us down

→AND....to change our ways...

→and so perhaps....it is time for us....to not only to “toot and tell” but to repent  
and realize...

→that the gift God values the most...is the soul and the heart...of a repentant sinner.