

FROM THE FATHERS

From a Homily by Saint Augustine (354-430)

A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit

Let us never assume that if we live good lives we will be without sin; our lives should be praised only when we continue to beg for pardon. But men are hopeless creatures, and the less they concentrate on their own sins, the more interested they become in the sins of others. They seek to criticise, not to correct. Unable to excuse themselves, they are ready to accuse others. This was not the way that David showed us how to pray and make amends to God, when he said: I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. He did not concentrate on others' sins; he turned his thoughts on himself. He did not merely stroke the surface, but he plunged inside and went deep down within himself. He did not spare himself, and therefore was not impudent in asking to be spared.

We should be displeased with ourselves when we commit sin, for sin is displeasing to God. Sinful though we are, let us at least be like God in this, that we are displeased at what displeases him. In some measure then you will be in harmony with God's will, because you find displeasing in yourself what is abhorrent to your Creator.

We become what we pray: notes on the Sacred Liturgy

The Entrance of the Priest

Our participation in the Body of Christ, his Church, is most fully manifest when we gather in Eucharistic Assembly. Whenever the Sacrifice of Christ in all its redeeming power is re-presented by the Priest, then the fulness of the Church is revealed. We really are the Church of Christ when we do faithfully and joyfully what God created the Church to do, set forth the Eucharistic Mystery to the world. That is why, at the beginning of Mass, when the Priest enters, the first thing he does is to kiss the altar, and then to cense it. When he kisses the altar he is recalling himself, and reminding others, that his first love is the privilege given to him of offering this sacrifice 'for the praise and glory of God's name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.' Such a simple thing as kissing the altar at the place where the sacrifice will be offered puts all of us in mind of the purpose of the priest's ministry, to make Christ present there for the sake of Christ's people. And immediately the altar is blessed with incense. The altar is both altar and throne: *altar* because it is a place where the once-for-all offering of right-worship by the Son to the Father is re-presented; and *throne* in that it is a place where the King of Kings will come to dwell in sacramental fullness in the gifts of his Body and Blood, for the feeding of his people. In both these things – kiss and censuring – the priest honours the altar on behalf of all, and makes it ready.

Prayers to Remember

O God, our Judge and Saviour, set before us the vision of thy purity, and let us see thy sins in the light of thy holiness. Pierce our self-contentment with the shafts of thy burning love, and let that love consume in us all that hinders us from perfect service of thy cause; for as thy holiness is our judgement, so are thy wounds our salvation.

Archbishop William Temple (1881-1944)

4th July
2021

Fifth Sunday
after Trinity/
Fourteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

He marvelled at their Unbelief



The saying goes 'familiarity breeds contempt'. To the people of Nazareth Jesus was 'the carpenter' and they knew his family. Some will remember him as a little boy and teenager. He was a local. Very few of us expect God to act powerfully in our part of town or village. All the really exciting things happen in another parish. We just plod along and don't expect anything or anybody to change very much. If this is the case (and I would be surprised if it isn't) Jesus must be marvelling at our lack of Faith. Faith opens up for us, our families and our communities the possibilities of God. Faith is the key that opens up hope and vision with all the healing gifts that Jesus brings into our lives: forgiveness, reconciliation and His love which is stronger than death. Every time you think 'that couldn't happen here' – think again. Ask the Lord for a renewal of faith and then see your familiar friends, your neighbours and colleagues as Jesus does; full of potential, and able to be made whole and holy. The disciples were the first to live within the possibilities of trusting in Jesus: they were all from the back of beyond and consider what happened with and in and through them.