

Reflection of Our Lady's Message 25th May 2011

“Dear Children! My prayer today is for all of you who seek the grace of conversion. You knock on the door of my heart, but without hope and prayer, in sin, and without the Sacrament of Reconciliation with God.

Leave sin and decide, little children, for holiness. Only in this way can I help you, hear your prayers and seek intercession before the Most High.

Thank you for having responded to my call.”

This month's message begins with Mary's prayer and wish “for all you who seek the grace of conversion.”

To seek the grace of conversion is to seek what God wants for all of us.

1. To be reconciled with God
2. To leave sin, and decide for holiness
3. To receive the help and prayers which make possible a renewed and lasting conversion to holiness of life.

TO BE RECONCILED WITH GOD

Through the sacraments of Initiation we receive the new life of Grace. However, we are earthen vessels, subject to suffering, illness, sickness and weakness. This new life of grace within us can be weakened or lost by sin. Christ continues his healing through the sacraments of the sick and reconciliation.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we obtain from God mercy for the offence committed against Him and are reconciled with the church which we have wounded by our sins.

Confession of our sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. It is also a confession of the holiness of God and his mercy towards us as poor sinners.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is primarily about Reconciliation, not just sin.

Forgiveness is there to be taken, to be received with thanksgiving. God in Christ has reconciled the world to Himself and through St Paul appeals to all to be reconciled with God.

Reconciliation imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles. The one who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call, “Go and be reconciled with your brother.” Reconciliation with the church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.

Having confessed our sins in the sacrament of reconciliation the priest prays, “May God give you pardon and peace and I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!”

Pardon – there is the Divine forgiveness. Peace – healing the wounds of sin. Let's not forget that Christ breathed upon his first apostles the Holy Spirit and power to forgive sins.

Please notice that the Priest pronounces words of absolution. “I absolve you,” Absolution is a need. It has nothing to do with solution. What solution is there to abortion when carried

out? Being reconciled with God is what matters, being reconciled with His will, His church. Accept that you are loved, forgiven and show your appreciation and gratitude by trying with God's help to remain faithful to the grace you have received.

Obstacles to receiving God's forgiveness are ignorance, fear, a lack of perception or awareness of what sin and evil is, and finally pride. God refuses the proud and favours the humble.

TO LEAVE SIN AND DECIDE FOR HOLINESS

As Christians and Catholics we are called not just to be good or better citizens, rather our call is to be holy as the Lord our God is holy.

The apostle Peter encourages us to "be holy in all that you do and make a habit of obedience."

The first requirement for becoming holy is to get down on our two knees humbly before God, and in prayer ask for the grace of conversion that will last, and bear the fruit of holiness of life. To become what we all are called to be. A holy church, a holy people who are set apart, consecrated to the Lord, who have been called out of darkness into His wonderful and marvellous light.

TO RECEIVE THE HELP AND PRAYERS WHICH MAKE CONVERSION POSSIBLE

How did the Lord bring the first pagans to conversion? We see in the Acts of Apostles he purified their heart through faith.

Our holiness too is a sharing, a participation in God's own holiness as Paul reminds us, "Christ is our virtue, our holiness, our freedom."

Faith in Christ is our first step in coming to know Christ and to be put on the path to perfection of love. "I only want the perfection that comes through faith," Paul cries out, and, it is the same for us too.

Our knocking on the door of Mary's heart or the heart of God Himself will not be in vain, nor without hope as long as we approach the Most High and His Blessed Mother with a disposition pleasing to them.

Scripture reminds us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Let us believe more firmly in prayer and ask for the grace and all the help we need to continue our journey of personal conversion keeping in mind that true conversion when it happens to us also seeks to pray, help and teach others the ways of God and holiness of life. That was part of the prayer and conversion of David, "that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you."

O Lord hear our prayer for each one of us personally and for all your people, that all may come to know with joy the light of your saving grace through conversion of heart. Amen
God bless you all. Fr Ciaran