

Thought for the day 28th march

CONFESSON

I confess that most of the time I do not think a great deal about confession. I suppose I often realise how much of a sinner I am and how I fail to live up to the example Jesus gave us during his life on earth, however I am also greatly aware of what Jesus did for us when he died for our sins. Through his resurrection we continue to receive his grace which allows us to do his work and be assured of absolution even in our imperfect lives.

When I started attending Church when I was 11 years old (after a few failed attempts at Sunday School) every service was still Book of Common Prayer. Although I am quite sure that I did not have a clue as to what was going on at Evensong and sermons were far too long in those days, I did enjoy the singing and the lovely words of the liturgy. The confession was what impressed my most and I still think that it is relevant today for everyone.

Here it is. Say it and think it through.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us: But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders; Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults, Restore thou them that are penitent, According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord: And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

In Church we would receive absolution from the Priest at this point and we should then do our very best to be that person that God wants us to be.

But do we really understand how sinful we are? “It’s a fair cop gov”, was a familiar saying in my boyhood days, when single channel television's highlight was Dixon of Dock Green. Our elderly police sergeant would always catch his crook and after a “Come on sunshine, we know you did it”, the miscreant would confess, or “sing”, to use a colloquialism. What a far cry from today's criminal fraternity, who would realise that all they had to do was stay dumb until some clever barrister came to their rescue, and they could get their claim in for wrongful arrest. I am sure that I am over exaggerating a complex situation, but I am convinced that people have dismissed the need to admit to their failings as they become less God centred.

In the Church of England, an act of confession or penitence is central to almost every service, and we need it, as, however good we think we are, none of us come near to what God would like us to be. Confessing our sins is so important, not just for God's sake, but for our very soul's sake and should be taken very seriously. Personal confidential confession is also still possible in our church for those who feel it is necessary, and it can sometimes help to relieve guilt, as long as the individual is prepared to accept advice concerning their penitence and way forward.

When I was a schoolboy, my housemaster got into a real lather one day when it was reported to him that someone had written a rude poem on the wall of one of the toilet cubicles. At our assembly he demanded that the person own-up to the crime, but to no avail. Mr. Chamings

was a lovely man, but like all housemasters of his day he wielded a fearsome cane and the culprit had no desire to feel it. The result was that the whole house was made to return after school and stand in silence for half an hour. This went on for a whole week and still nobody confessed, and the situation was only resolved when a group of older boys volunteered to repaint the toilet on Saturday morning, using paint bought with money that we were saving-up for our Christmas party.

We all suffered for one boy's foolish behaviour; Jesus suffered on the cross for all our foolish behaviour. Take your confession seriously and try to change your ways in accordance with the love that you have received from our Saviour. Confession is not just another prayer that we recite in our services, together with absolution it is a sacrament in its own rite.

Fr. Terry:

P.S. Fr Terry will be available for confession on Church street on Sunday morning from 10:30am till 11:30 am, please drive slowly as you go passed!

