

## SIN

There are many misconceptions about sin. There are even more misconceptions about the Roman Catholic notion of sin. In the past a close proximity to the reality of death, and real fear to eternal damnation created an emphasis on wickedness which gave it the prominence it craved.

Sadly such celebrity is misplaced. Sin is more often than not pathetic, not dramatic. Sin is destructive rather than charismatic. Sinful people are either running away from their personal reality, or have been so compromised by life that they understand their situation as hopeless.

The place of self-pity can be a mournful and comfortable place. The familiar surroundings of self-condemnation much less stressful than the Christian demands of aspiration, and faith.

Can you do any better.

I am afraid that you can do better. Much as very often you do not want to.

Sin is often portrayed as a glamorous celebration of life.

The reality is that sin is a progressive destruction of life.

A slow bleeding of the spirit.

A developmental process of ruin.

My favourite model of someone definitely making their way to hell is Charles Dickens Scrooge.

In the Christmas Carol Dickens describes how this young man Ebenezer Scrooge begins life as quite capable of joy. He dances with great enthusiasm at a Christmas party. He has a close relationship with his sister. He even has a potential marital relationship with good and faithful partner.

However slowly and surly his fears dominate his life. He replaces love with money. Unaware of his state he chooses isolation. Relationships are taken on with a purely business expectation. Social responsibility is seen only in terms of the tax he pays.

He is wealthy but enjoys none of his wealth

He lives in a large cold house on his own in his misery

He a small pathetic little man.

He was not born this way

He becomes.

God created each one of us as beautiful

We share our nature with the incarnate Jesus Christ

God became human

Therefore humanity cannot be fundamentally bad

But we suffer from the sickness of sin.

We suffer from the illness which is rooted in original sin.

You would not condemn a person to death because they had a cold.

You would not abandon someone because they were suffering even from Cancer.

God does not abandon us because we struggle with the virus of sin.

God seeks to heal us and make us whole.

the sacrament of Reconciliation

The sacrament of confession is one of the means in which this healing is able to take place.

However this sacrament is as much practical as it is spiritual.

That is if there is any difference between the two.

If I have an illness this generally shows itself in the form of symptoms. So measles produces spots. Even a cold will find expression with a sore throat, headache, cough.

If I ignore the symptoms the viral infection will generally get worse.

People can die of measles.

No one ever died of a cold, but this cold can develop into Eumonia.

Ignored the symptoms of illness get progressively worse.

So it is with sin.

Individual events of sin are a symptoms of the infection of sinfulness.

Should we choose to ignore these individual events, these individual sins, then the viral infection of sinfulness can grow and develop.

Just like Ebenezer Scrooge if we ignore the events of our selfishness and fear we can thus become smaller and smaller people. More isolated by our choices. Less capable of either accessing love, or taking advantage of the opportunities of celebrating love.

When we come to the sacrament of reconciliation. The sacrament of confession there is the potential for a powerful humility.

If I am aware of a little white lie and am capable of admitting that fault, the chances of my becoming a pathological liar are diminished.

If I am aware of getting drunk and losing control, the chances of developing a drink problem are diminished.

If I face the fact that I screamed at the children because I had a bad day. Then I am in a position to heal the rift with the children and address the pressure I am under.

I deal with the symptoms of my sinfulness and thus do not allow the consequences of my fallen nature to grow.

This is the attempt.

Pope John Paul II celebrated the sacrament each morning for this reason.

We will celebrate this sacrament now.

Are there any of us here that are perfect

No there are not.

But our faith calls us to the humility of this sacrament.

And much as honesty is difficult.

This is its ultimate expression

Tell the truth and shame the devil.

Recognise those simple events

Be forgiven

And move on.