

DESPITE OUR SINFULNESS, GOD STILL LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY

If God allows each of us to take or play His role at different times, from your observation of how some of our political leaders act, what do you think will happen? If God decides to think and act like us, He will destroy everything in the world in a wink of an eye. God loves us unconditionally and always shows us love at any given opportunity. In today's first reading (Exodus 32:7-14), the Israelites whom God saved from slavery in Egypt and who, in their covenant with God promised loyalty to Him, sinned or were unfaithful to the terms of the covenant. Their punishment was to destroy them, and in fairness, God cannot go against the terms of the covenant or fail to give them their due punishment. God, out of His love and not to act unfairly, told Moses about the sins of the Israelites for him to intercede on their behalf. When Moses interceded on behalf of the Israelites, God forgave them. Like Jesus Christ, Moses did not sin but interceded for those who sinned. PERSONALLY, I THINK SOME OF THE CRISES, CHALLENGES OR PROBLEMS WE HAVE IN THE WORLD ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS. When God reveals another person's sins to you, He wants you to pray for the person as Moses did for the Israelites. According to Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, "The worst thing on earth is not sin but denial of sin." To help your doctor diagnose your sickness and give you medication, you must tell him or her the symptoms you are having or how you are feeling. How would you feel as a medical practitioner if someone who is sick pointed out to you that he or she is not sick? Of course, you will not be able to do anything to help the person. Sin is a spiritual sickness that can be cured by God if we acknowledge it before Him and ask for healing. Our psalm today (Psalm 51) is King David's acknowledgment of his sin and plea for forgiveness when he sinned. God because of His unconditional love forgave David. One of the reasons why Jesus commanded us not to judge is because we do not know whom He has forgiven. WHEN GOD FORGIVES, HE NEVER ASSOCIATES THE SIN WITH THE PERSON AGAIN. I am edified with the humility of this great saint, St. Paul, who despite his successes in doing the will of God and the great works God did through him, in the second reading today, pointed out that he was "the foremost" sinner whom God treated with mercy. St. Paul acknowledged that he was once a blasphemer, persecutor, and arrogant (1 Timothy 1:12-17). In the Mass, we acknowledge our unworthiness to receive Jesus in the Eucharist by responding "Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we tell God to forgive us our sins for we have sinned. WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SINS AND ASK FOR FORGIVENESS BECAUSE JESUS TOLD US TO ASK THAT WE SHALL

RECEIVE (Matthew 7:7). Faith is an important requirement for receiving the forgiveness of our sins when approaching the throne of mercy in the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In the Gospel reading today (Luke 15:1-32), Jesus used the famous parable of the Prodigal Son to enlighten us on the unconditional and immensity of God's love towards us. In the Parable, the Prodigal Son made a decision to take a share of his father's inheritance and distance himself from his father. When we sin, we freely distance ourselves from God. And when we keep sinning without turning to God to seek forgiveness, we keep moving farther away from God until the distance becomes so far that we think we cannot go back again. At this point in time, most Christians lose interest in hearing about God's will and in doing God's will. Losing interest in God's will diminishes internal happiness. Lack of this internal happiness can make people give up in life amid challenges or crises. After distancing himself from his beloved father and squandering his share of his father's inheritance, the Prodigal Son was internally sad amid the challenges he had. The good news is that God is always on the lookout to receive us back and bless us with this happiness no matter how far we distanced ourselves from Him. PLEASE DESPITE THE FACT THAT GOD LOVES EACH OF US UNCONDITIONALLY, LET US NOT ABUSE THIS LOVE. Someone jokingly invited me to his examination and told me that he would like to confess his sin after cheating in the examination. Though this is a joke, let us try not to abuse God's unconditional love. MAY GOD HELP US TO APPRECIATE HIS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, AMEN.