

Repent and Convert

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*From a letter to the Corinthians by Pope Saint Clement I of Rome (35-100)
(Cap. 7,7-8,3; 8,5-9,1;13,1-4;19,2: Funk 1, 71-73,77-78)*

Let us fix ourselves attentively to the Blood of Christ and realize how precious It is to the eyes of God and His Father since, He spilled It for our salvation and offered It to the entire world for the grace of our conversion.

Let us go through all the eras in history and we shall see how in any of them the Lord has granted opportunities to repent for all those who have wanted to convert to Him. Noah predicated penitence, and those who listened to him were saved. Jonah announced destruction to the Ninivites but they, performing penitence for their sins, placated the ire of God with their prayers and attained salvation, in spite of not belonging to the people of God.

The ministers of divine grace, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke regarding conversion. The Lord Himself spoke also about conversion, praising His words with an oath: *By My life - says the Lord - I am not pleased with the death of the sinner, but rather, in the change of his conduct*, adding those so well-known words: *cease to work evil deeds, House of Israel. Say to the children of my people: 'Even though your sins may reach up to heaven, even though it be like the grain and the reds like scarlet, if you convert yourselves to Me with all your heart and you say: 'Father', I will listen to you as my holy people whom you are.'*

Thus wanting all those whom He loves to benefit from conversion, I confirm this sentence with His Omnipotent Will.

Let us then submit to His splendid and glorious Will, and, humbly imploring for his mercy and benignity, let us take refuge in His clemency, abandoning vain works, quarrels and envy, all things that lead to death. Let us be, brothers and sisters, humble in spirit; let us abandon all arrogance and haughtiness, all insensitivity, and place as our work that which is written, as the Holy Spirit states: *may not the wise glory in his wisdom, nor the rich in his riches; rather who glories, may he glory in the Lord, seeking Him and working the right way and that of Justice, remembering above all the words of the Lord Jesus, with which He teaches equity and goodness.*

In effect, He said: *Be merciful and you will attain mercy; forgive and you shall be forgiven; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; give and you shall be given; do not judge and you will not be judged; in the measure that you are benign, you will experience benignity; in the measure that you measure you shall be measured as well.*

Let us adjust our conduct and our mandates and in this manner, obeying His words, let us comport ourselves always with humility. The Word of God in effect, says: *In that person I will place My countenance: in the humble and the downtrodden that shakes before My words.*

In this way, imitating the work of so many others, great and illustrious, let us run once again towards the goal that has been proposed to us since the beginning, and that is peace. Let us not lose sight of the One who is Father and Creator of the entire world, and let us have our hope placed in the munificence and exuberance of the gift of peace that is being offered to us.

PRAYER

Upon beginning this Lent, we ask you, Lord, that you give us a true spirit of conversion: in this way the austerity of penitence of these days will serve us as help in our fight against the spirit of evil. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit and is God, for ever and ever, Amen.

"Since then all things are seen and heard by God, let us fear Him, and forsake those wicked works which proceed from evil desires."

"We should let God be the One to praise us and not praise ourselves.
For God detests those who commend themselves.
Let others applaud our good deeds."

Pope Saint Clement I of Rome



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