

Column111322

Companions on the Journey

November 13,2022

Dear Friends,

As I write my column it is Monday, November 7. Earlier this morning I celebrated a funeral Mass and as the Broadway Show title goes: Something Funny Happened On The Way to the Forum. There was sudden influx about forgiveness right at the consecration of the Mass. It was as I spoke Jesus' own words over the chalice filled with wine. "This is the chalice of my blood poured out for you and for many—for the forgiveness of sins." All that Jesus did and accomplished was for the forgiveness of our sins.

The thought was this. Who has sins anymore? There are many, many people of the 330,000,000 people in the United States today who do not believe they have sins or have sinned. Oh, people make mistakes. They miscalculate. They misunderstand. They didn't get the big picture. They did not intend to do anything wrong (so in their own minds they, therefore, did not do anything wrong). Well, I was a bit selfish back there. I didn't mean to do anyone harm. How was I to know they were that sensitive?

But sin? Real, calculating, personally enhancing sin which creates distrust and destroys order? No. Not too many do that. Watch a lot of sexually explicit material online to see to your physical pleasure? Switch tags on items when shopping? Fail to scan everything at the store? Misrepresent on your tax returns? Lie or omit important details to get a sale? Take your anger out on your kids? Let yourself get carried away in how much alcohol you consume? Lie to your spouse? To your boss? Cast a cold eye on what your neighbor has that you don't? Spread ungodly gossip about people you know and people you don't without checking the veracity, especially to do harm to another's person or reputation? Miss Mass with some regularity? Use God's name as an expletive?

You get my drift. I am talking about real personal sins. Things we do because we choose to do so. Things we do not do because we choose not to do so. There is a lot of destructive behavior out there and very much in and around all of us. It is sin. It is real. It costs us. It tears at us. We cannot stop by our own efforts. We cannot even forgive ourselves unless we admit there is something in need of being forgiven. And that is one of the big things missing in our society. I am writing this before the elections of Tuesday. I have no idea of the outcome. But I know this. A lot of money was spent and a lot of lies were told and a lot of people were destroyed—on all sides of this thing we call politics. And oftentimes we don't really care if the person is on the opposite side of us politically. What kind of follower of Christ thinks like that? And if we believe that our party is lily pure and it is only the other political party that has blood, sweat and tears on its hands then we are quite mistaken and not seeing truly.

Which brings me back to my original point. We sin. We human beings. We need to be honest and humble. We need to bow our heads and beat our breasts realizing that if we do not find a way out, (if we do not realize we need a way out) we will die this way, die in our sins. Unless there is one from God to forgive us. Thank God there is. But forgiveness is real for us when we admit our sins. Anything short of that will leave us short at the end. And that my dear friends none of us wants to happen. You know what you must do. Step up. Ask for pardon and start living better, with the help of his grace, the way of Jesus Christ.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry