

THE GRACE OF CONVERSION LEADS TO REPENTANCE

In today's Gospel parable (Matt 21:28-32), Jesus is telling us to repent for our sins if we wish to live in heaven. It is never too late to change our selfish attitudes in order to please God (Ezek 18:25-28). Jesus is teaching us that faith is useless without putting it into full action. The first son responds to his father with a 'no', but then on reflection, he changes his attitude, and repents for his disobedient way. The second son, replied with an insincere 'yes'. He was full of pretence, wearing a mask of hypocrisy. This parable is very relevant to us in today's world. For example, Catholics who appear to be faithful, but voted 'yes' for abortion (pro-choice), divorce and same sex marriage, also wear masks of hypocrisy. Their actions totally contradict the teachings of Jesus Christ. But not all is lost, if they change their attitude and listen to Jesus, when He tells us that our bodies are temples to give glory to God and not be abused to kill the unborn or as objects of sexual desire and lust without the intention to procreate. Jesus is imploring us to listen to Him and repent. The choices we make now will not only affect and shape our future in this world, but also in the world beyond the grave. Heaven and Hell exist.

CONVERSION IS A CALL FROM GOD

Those lacking true commitment to the commandments of God will be preceded in the Kingdom of God by *tax collectors and prostitutes*. This does not mean that Jesus is promoting sinners and prostitutes as models of life. He is stating that the *privilege of grace* is offered to anyone who opens up and converts to Him. These people who were living a sinful lifestyle, and once rejected the Commandments, listened to Jesus preach, and acted, by repenting and changing their lifestyles and attitudes. Conversion is not easy, but is possible, even for the hardest of hearts, when touched by divine grace. The rewards are eternal life. Changing from our old immoral ways to Christ's moral ways of Truth is not always easy, but we have to trust that Our Creator knows best for us. He is the only Way for us to get to heaven. It is a spiritual path making it necessary to exercise renunciation, sacrifice and complete obedience to His divine will. It is giving up our sins. A Christian life must consist of concrete actions and commitments to our Father in Heaven, and in turn, to *always consider the other person to be better than ourselves, so that nobody thinks of their own interests first. Everybody should think of the other person's interests instead. In our minds we must be the same as Christ Jesus* (Phil 2:1-11). We are all called to satisfy' God's Will and Commandments while living on earth, if we are serious about going to Heaven. God bless, Fr Brendan.