

+ *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.*

Q: So....when did you last go to Confession?

R: I am an Anglican; I don't need Confession!

Q: Oh....really?



The Epiphany is one of the most exciting feasts in the Christian Year as it explores the ways in which God reveals Himself to us, to Mary, to Joseph, to the Magi (the Gentiles) and to the Shepherds. Some saw angels, some dreamed dreams, others saw a bright new Star....but all were intensely aware that it was God speaking to them – revealing Himself to them for a specific purpose. How exciting!

There is also the downside of the Feast of the Epiphany – why is God speaking to them and not to me? Why is it that I cry out to God for a revelation, but He is silent ...? It is so frustrating!

On the 6th January we discussed very briefly ways to open one's ears to the 'still small voice' with which God always seems to speak. We are all aware that study of Scripture, additional time spent in prayer, fasting and charitable works can assist us in hearing the voice of God, but there is something else that is seldom spoken about in modern times, least of all in the church, and that is sin.

Sin is a very serious matter. Sin blocks our attempts to move straight ahead on our spiritual journey. Sin stands between our Righteous God and those who have sinned. Sin is the great destroyer of relationships, be they in the home, at work, between friends or siblings, in the church, but most particularly between me and my God. Sin is deadly...its wages are death and hell!

The parable of the Prodigal Son tells us of the young man who selfishly left his home and wasted all his inheritance. How interesting, that when he *"comes to his senses"* [Lk 2:17] he realised that he had sinned against his father. He famously says : *"I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son..."* Lk15:18/19 He didn't say "I have offended my father by spending his money"... he says *"I have sinned!"* This verse has made such an impact, that Anglicans the world over have used it as the opening sentence to the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer for centuries. The need for repentance, for a new start, a sinless start, is crystal clear.

I said, earlier, that sin blocks our attempts to walk a godly path and destroys our relationships. But in the context of the current Season, the Season of Epiphany, sin destroys any chance for us to have a vision of God at all, or ever to hear the still, small voice. While sin runs rampant through our thoughts and deeds, there can be *no* Epiphany – no sudden realization of a spiritual truth, no awakening of our sin-deadened spirit....we will remain in a barren land, dry and lifeless – that is, until we repent.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to us for one purpose, to set us free from sin and its end result, death. He did not come to tell us nice stories or impress us with his wisdom – He came to deal with the problem of sinful man and a Righteous God - and deal with it He did. On the Cross of Calvary, our Lord and Saviour bled and died, and His blood has cleaned us from all sin! Alleluia!! We no longer are a fear filled people, a people with no hope for the future. No, we are a ransomed, healed, restored and forgiven people. We are the people of God!

We do still sin, though, don't we? We still disappoint ourselves and our Lord by our conduct and carelessness....but we are taught that *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not*

in us, but, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” [1 Jn 1:8/9]

I think you can see what I am saying to you? Unconfessed sin, be it of any kind whatsoever, will never allow you that Epiphany you so deeply long for. Not until you confess your sin, and make things right with God, will you ever hear His still, small voice, see His Star, hear His angels sing....

My original questions still stands : Q. So...when did you last go to Confession? +

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen