

The god-in-jesus continuously reach out to us

[Religion](#), [Jesus](#)



That's no way to row old. It's all a matter of habit- at least, that's what I'm told. " The old man gave him a look of pity and said, " My dear young friend, have you ever examined a grain field and notice which heads are bent and which ones stand up straight? If you take a good look as harvest time draws near, you will notice that the heads which are empty are standing tall and high. But the heads that make a good harvest are the ones that are filled and bending low. " The young man heard those words and passed by, slowly bowing his head. No doubt he pondered many a day on what the old man had said.

Excerpt from the book "The Next 500 Stories") Questions for Reflections: 1 . What do you think is the message of the story? 2. What do you think is the story telling us about the young man? 3. What do you think is the story telling us about the old man? 4. Can you cite examples/experiences in your life that shows you as the young man in the story? 5. Can you cite examples/experiences in your life that shows you as the old man in the story?

Synthesis: 1 . Are you a person who admits easily your own fault or you would rather give reasons to cover your shame? Or you would rather mention the fault of others? . Is there a time when you feel guilty because of denying the truth which you are supposed to admit? 3. Do you agree to the idea that a person is still guilty even if the mistake or sin was just a result of the circumstances which she/he did not intentionally make? 4. Do you think life is unfair when people blame you for committing a fault or mistake that you did not intend to do? Let us " DISCERN" In the previous chapter we reflected upon the virtue of selfless giving of oneself for others because of love as shown by Jesus in his life, death and resurrection.

Jesus is presented as the best example of a truly human person whose life was lived for death and resurrection the meaning of sharing one's blessing from God; of the value of sharing other people's burden; and gratitude which ultimately draws us closer to God-in-Jesus and to our brothers and sisters. His compassionate heart was always present for people who long for love, healing, forgiveness, attention, importance, and for those who were searching for truth and the true meaning of life. This God-in-Jesus never changes. God reaches out to us even today and continuously reach out to us in our human frailty, imperfection, flaws and sinfulness.

Because of this there is always hope. Giving up has no place in the heart of our Compassionate God. Neither should it have a place in our human heart. The God-in-Jesus continues to reach out to us through the church, though wounded as she is, the Church remains the visible sign God's gift of reconciliation; celebrated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To be a Church and to be a Christian is to exercise a certain kind of ministry: to continue what Jesus began during his public ministry and which was highlighted and brought to its climax in his passion, death and resurrection.

It is in this light that we shall now attempt to understand the church-community as a wounded healer and sacrament of reconciliation as celebration of reconciliation with self, others and God. 1 . The Church-community Remembers: Sin is real but God's love is greater and more powerful The word for sin in the New Testament is hamster (gar), which means making a mistake (literally, "missing the mark"), a conscious action

rooted in the heart. While in Latin is " culpa" refer to culpability. This refers too person who is responsible of committing sin.

In the Old Testament sin points to violations of relationships; Hath(web) is the most common word used for sin; meaning " to miss he mark or to offend". Therefore, we can say that a person has committed a sin if she/he has missed the thing that he/she was supposed to do or ought to do as a person. The existing relationship between the two parties has been damaged because someone failed to live out to what is expected of him/her. If we examine further, we note a rupture of the covenant-relationship, a broken promise.

Further, sin diminishes the worth of the relationship; it ignores the sense of human moral solidarity, and even the fidelity to self, to partner, group and to God. Instead of being a truly and fully human person (loving) the person chooses to do otherwise. Richard Gulag mentioned that sin disrupts radically the person's relationship... And turns that person away from openness to life and love. Jesus himself would say: (Mark 7: 6, 15, 21). " This people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.

Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile... For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come:

fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things mom from within and they defile a person. " Sin is very much real in our life and in our world. This is something we cannot deny. At the same time we believe that

God's love and life is greater and more powerful. For us to accept and embrace God's redeeming love and life.

We are lovingly invited to " let go from", and be " free from", the slavery of sin, so that we find " in Jesus Christ, the faithful witness... To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev 1 : 5,) as we profess our faith that our God who loves us in the beginning and the God who was and who is to come, will be the a loving God for eternity. Jesus is the incarnation of the heart of our Forgiving God. In the public ministry of Jesus, forgiveness is manifested in all his works, teachings, and instructions. The constant love of God seen especially to those who lost their full humanity and lost connection with their spirituality.

God's great love to humankind is expressed in the following parables such as The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18: 12-14; Luke 15: 3-7), Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15: 8-10), and Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32). The latter part in the story of the Parable of the Prodigal Son is the best ascription of a compassionate Father/Mother God: (Luke 15: 20-22, 32.) " So he (younger son) set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

Then the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. " But the father said to his slaves, Quick, bring out a robe- the best one- and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. "... But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this rather of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and

has been found. " To be a Christian and to be a Church is to remember that our Loving God had limitless, immeasurable, endless ways of showing forgiveness to those who want to " come home," and to the ones who were " lost and had been found. Jesus himself once said " I tell you, in Just the same way there will be more Joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance"(Elk 15: 7). God's love is unbelievable. But it is true. In the words of Raymond Brown " God's love pursues us from the cradle to the grave. For Henry Owen " God's heart is a heart of limitless mercy. " Neal Fisher says " the boundless love of the father changes everything; it is in the place of a confrontation, where the son finds a coronation. The Sacrament of Reconciliation bridges us to God's unlimited love. The human response, seen in the confession is a way of " coming home", going back to the original image (Creation story), and freedom from slavery (Salvation history), bond offriendshipJesus' martyrdom), form of praise and worship, (reflections from theologians), these are all God's unspeakable way of sharing love to humanity. The overflowing spirit of God move us to a deeper level of awareness, a new perspective of life, a new bonds of belonging, thus, everything has full of meaning.

The reconciled person, learn to live and love, not only for his/her welfare but a channel of God's love. The grace has been reciprocated through gratitude, openness with others' imperfections and shortcomings. The fullness of life will reverberates by touching people's lives. Sharing of what has been received by showing full concern, guiding a person who has been lost and wasted. The been awake, presently aware, " light up" moments, " religious

encounter", that has mom from ordinary experience magnitude because of openness to receive God's grace.

The individual human beings, the Church, the Christian communities, as well as non-Christian believers, is a challenge to be the channel of the Creator's love and bring happiness to those who are afflicted. 2. The Church-community Believes: Sin can be overcome. God wants us to "come home" The author of the book "Boundless love: The Parable of the Prodigal Son and Reconciliation", Joel Whiffletrees talks about the momentous message of the gestures, signs, symbols and words of the father in the story of the Prodigal Son "God's unbelievable love.

Not a word of reproach not one question. "The speechless father is a sign of love, beyond words can say on how happy the father was. He sets aside the blames, hurts, grudges but an acceptance of the repented son. This tremendous, unbelievable love and mercy of God is beautifully interpreted by God's redemptive love experienced in the humanity of Jesus, the redemptive love of Jesus through forgiveness, a love that all human beings do not deserve. Jesus, the forgiving God making himself present in the lives of humans through graces or gift of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Every moment of reconciliation and forgiveness that takes place in human life and the world is the visible sign of redemptive love of God. My friend and I visited the place of Sir. Maraca, the coordinator of the office of the International Relation at Adamson University. While waiting for sister to come out from her room; we saw a small display made of glass, we were amazed how it was formed because the glass had a crack but it has become

part of the design of the glass. Then we concluded that " we can still fix the broken pieces/parts into whole again.

The crack was still there but it turns into beautiful highlight as far as the glass s concerned. How does this apply to our human situation? Most of the time we easily give up when everything is too hard to fix? When everything falls into desolation, darkness, and disappointments our tendency is to lose hope and give up. Like the glass display that was rebuilt to make it useful and glossy glass again, retaining its beauty, we are challenge to do the same with our lives and our person. When a glass is broken we usually will not pick or gather the small pieces because it will hurt us, so we sweep it and throw it away.

But that is not what God wants as far as our life is unconcerned. God does not want it that way. Our life is priceless in the eyes of God. We are priceless in the eyes of God. God wants us to be whole again. " Man cannot sever himself from God, because God will not let him go. " (Edward Excellence) God does not have the heart to separate, forsake, abandon or even break the " promise of love" to human beings; even if because of our frailty and stubbornness we usually hide from the love of God. Even then God will never give up on us. In the words of prophet Isaiah " I will never forget you.

I have carved you in the palm of my hand (less: 1 5) everlasting. No matter what happens humans will always be accepted, loved and welcome by God. The Church is a community of people coming home to the Father/Mother. The Church is the tangible sign of the presence of God's life and love here on earth. The Church, the Christian community is not perfect; it is wounded. But

the same time she is called by Christ and challenge by Christ to be a "wounded healer" to be the bearer of God's endless and boundless love, forgiveness and mercy; the church is the assurance that we are accepted once again, welcomed and loved into newness and wholeness by

God. All we need to do is to come home to the Father/Mother. 3. The Church-community Celebrates: Reconciliation-our coming home to our self, others and God (Conversion) There was a man who was been religious all throughout his life; he started as a Sacristan, and then became a youth leader, in Music Ministry. He fell in love with a sophisticated woman, and then they married. He became father of two kids, and a loving husband, suddenly he gave in to temptation and had an illegal affair. This man fell totally guilty; he knew that what he did was wrong.

He went to the Church, with rare eyes, asking for God's forgiveness, he didn't want to go to confession. He just knelt down, consciously aware of his helplessness. He was ashamed, wanted to hide his face, and he had already given up on becoming a better person. He caught himself unaware that he was in front of the priest for communion, as he looked at the holy host, it was not in a perfect shape. Surprisingly the host had a bite, and only half of it was... And half of when it was given to him.

Looking at the image off Crucified Jesus, he realized it was Jesus who bit the other part telling him " I am in your wounds, truffles, pains, isolation, look at me I am hanging on the cross to tell you that I will not give up on you, even if you hide yourself in shame". Then, the man experienced a deep awareness that God was with him throughout his Journey. He decided to go immediately

to the confession room, recognizing that God had already forgiven him. Finally, the absolution, freed him from guilt, he believed he had a companion, in Christ, in Spirit, and in the Church.

In the story, the man experiences liberation from sins through sacramental signs; like the holy host, the image of Crucified Jesus, and the presence of the priest. But even before the person receives the official sacrament of reconciliation, the grace of God is already there. The real grace of the sacrament of reconciliation is the humans experience of God's love and life giving humans the power to overcome sin and alienation through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we have mentioned earlier whenever sin and evil is overcome and love and forgiveness triumphs, there is the sacrament of reconciliation.

The official celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation is the church proclamation and " rejoicing" over the triumph of God's love and originates over sin and evil which is actually happening in life daily. The official sacrament of reconciliation celebrates reconciliation (the overcoming of sin and evil) status and person in relation to one self, others and God. " If sin is always a deviation from what one ought to do or to be as a person (hamster); reconciliation is conversion: turning around, re-orientation, revitalization, healing from wounded-news and sin.

Reconciliation is first and foremost a going back to one's true self, a grateful acceptance of who one truly is and a willingness to live with this reality(De Los Santos: 986. 110). " The sacrament enlarges the richness and the reality of an experience of God already going on and brings the experience to a new

level of expression and awareness in our lives. "(Bernard Haring) Prior on our response to God's love, it was already present, everyday, in the ordinary days of life, but we did not recognize it. Thus our whole life is made of grace, the goodness and greatness of God.

The presence and love of God is from the moment we were born or even when we are still in our mother's womb. The official sacrament of reconciliation is a visible sign of Christ's boundless love for mankind. The repented sinner shows an act of humility through acceptance of his/ her wrongdoings. This opens the door for worship, adoration and thanksgiving for our Compassionate God. The decision made by the repentant sinner to confess sins is a sign of praise, of " coming home", entrusting once again our life to God.

The manifestations of healing will take place in different aspects in the lives of people. As a Christian community, we believe that we, the Church are called and challenge by Christ to continue the redemptive acts of God: reconciliation and conversion through love and forgiveness. Since sin has social and communal dimension, the sacrament of reconciliation includes the challenge and the call for us to repair our broken relationship with the community if our celebrations of the sacrament of reconciliation is to be truly meaningful and truthful.

Society is also wounded by sin and evil and much of the sin and alienation that afflicts people today have become increasingly systemic. There is a need for many of our systems to be converted or replaced (This will be the primary concerned of Theology Reconciliation and conversion includes the

challenge to restore all things to Christ. In the words of SST Paul: (Room 8: 22-23) " We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait... Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (Evangelic Stadium, 269) says: " Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing else than the culmination of the way he lived his entire life. Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, eloping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world.

But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us Joy and gives meaning to our lives". (Authentic Transformation) The Church community support the repentant sinner for the continuous realization of God's kingdom here on earth. The Church community makes a way for personal conversion. The Christian community helps the penitent for continuous spiritual Roth. Conversion does not only come from a sinful state but rather from God's grace and from the possible transformation of a person in the everyday experience of life.

The Church-community needs to strengthen the conviction for the need and reality of authentic transformation. As Kathleen Hugs and Barbara Quinn believe, " conversion is an invitation to a new or deeper relationship with God who draws each one of us into a new future of hope and of rich

possibilities. " The persons' personal conviction of " liberation from sin" is supplemented through community's religious gatherings and activities. Conversions gradually occur through community prayers and worship, scriptures readings, reflections, and social outreach programs.

Furthermore, conversion is about dying to self and to rise to a new level of humanity, exclusivity to inclusively, depression to appreciation, and isolation to communion. The sharing of one's burden leads to social responsibility which shapes our society and challenges issues that degrade human dignity, stifles freedom and existing system which foment sinful structures. The Church as a " community of virtues,"(lesson 2) exists as a living testimony of our Loving God, alive through our everyday relationship with Self, Others God, and all God's creation.

Moreover, the Church-community guides the repentant sinner by making the spirit of Christ's alive, a symbol of faith and hope, practicing the values and attitudes of Christ. As Paul reminded the Church of the Romans that: " If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer slaves to sin-because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Romans 6: 5-7) The book of the Acts of the Apostles chapters 9, 22, and 26, comprehensibly narrate Paul's conversion which in turn becomes a very important aspect in the growth of the Early Church. The conversion experience of Paul steered him to carry on his mission and to become known as the great Apostle of Gentiles. One of the missions of the Church-

community is to promote life and cultivate a rich relationship with God of people, especially the neglected people of our society.

Certainly, the Church- community must be an instrument of healing and growth, holiness of individual and immunities through the spirit of reconciliation of self, others, nature and the Living In the affirmation of our faith that the Church-community is " the body of Christ, and we are onefamilyof God" then, the Church-community is one with God's Joy who celebrates with the " coming home" of the " the prodigal son". The fraternal correction made by the Church-community should be " an expression of co-responsibility and solidarity of salvation", as conveyed by Bernard Haring.

The reconciling Church must " homes" and " comfort" those who are struggling to follow the path of holiness. The Church-community does not look on our shortcomings, faults, and iniquities but on the great desire to be forgiven and restored as " Whole Family' again for the Love of The Church-community must be the epitome of healing and reconciliation for the restoration of relationship, newness, and transformation of society. The sacrament of reconciliation within the Church-community becomes the recuperation of the " wounds" and hurts in the past, processing the grievances, and seeking renewal of fragmented relationship.

John De Grouchy clearly stated that " reconciliation is way in which we speak with and listen to the alienated 'other'. It is already an action that makes reconciliation a possibility. " Thus, reconciliation is a commitment with a) God's relationship to humanity b) relations with others c) fostering Justice incultureand communities d) political authenticity. The reconciliation of

Jewish-Christian community and Muslim-Christian community navigate to communion of " Church as Family of God". In Him alone is our hope, in Him alone are we Justified! When will you cease running in search for hallow meaning? " (Taken from the song " In Him Alone") We, the Church-community as Wounded Healer is challenged to be united once again to our impassioned God, to die to our sinfulness and to rise with Jesus, and to be a living sign of God's merciful love for sinners. Let us " ACT/PARA A. Let us now pray together Psalm 103: 1-18. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle' The Lord works vindication and Justice for all who are pressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As the father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. B. Activity: Write a personal letter to your parents. The letter must contain the following:

1. Expression of thanksgiving and gratitude to your parents for all the good things they have done and continue to do for you.

Cite one to three examples of those which you think are the best that they have done for you. 2. Expressions of repentance and expression of asking for forgiveness for all the wrong things you have done to your parents. Cite one to three examples of those sins which you think are the worst you have done to them. 3. Expressions of forgiveness done to you. Cite one to three examples of such sins or offenses. . Expressions of desire to be reconciled with your parents from this day onward and the desire to start all over again.

B.