



A Letter from the Monks of the Holy Annunciation Hermitage
Lent 2021, Letter 51

Psalm 50: A Meditative Dialogue (Part 3)

► ♀ 7 — *Behold, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother bore me.*

I — I can see that Adam's sin has tainted or twisted human nature, but should I be blamed personally for the wrong committed? Do you have any answer, Witness?

Witness — I leave to theologians the question of how sin entered the world. I can just say that the words of the psalm make it clear that we acknowledge the human condition resulting from original sin.

Jesus Christ — Adam and Eve fell because they rejected love. They considered God as a rival and broke the relationship.

I — But they were the image of God!

Jesus Christ — Yes, but they did not see Him as a lover. They wanted to be masters of their own life. They perverted the love that was given to them, and they ended up separated from love, that is, from the meaning of life which is born from the Holy Trinity.

I — What about us, the children of the cross? The children of the Church?

Jesus Christ — Baptism gives to those who acknowledge Me the power to become children of God. Beloved, the desire to return to the Father is in you like a spark, like embers. Keep your eyes on Me, and I will take care of you. After many attempts at saving mankind, God sent Me to take away the sins of the world and raise you up in glory.

I — Witness, can you explain a little more?

Witness — Without God, Adam and Eve lost the meaning of life: love. They remained alone, separated. However, God has always promised that He would seek reconciliation, even if His people did not want it. Christ was sent to take care of Adam's race and deliver them from their faults (1). The Old Testament is the history of how God tried to seek reconciliation with His people. After many attempts, God sent His Son, as it is described in the parable of the vineyard. Reconciliation will be offered to those who confess Him as Jesus Christ, Son of God.



Collective sins of mankind



Jesus Christ — You see, Beloved, that it is not a question of personal blame or guilt. Not in the eyes of God. Think about time! Remember that a thousand years in the eyes of My Father are like the day of yesterday that is past or like a watch in the night. (2)

I — Yes, Lord, I understand that I existed even when I was still unformed. (3) I feel so little, like a small dust of mankind.

Jesus Christ — Beloved, you entered the world partaking of a collective sin, before you could even commit any personal sins. (4) Human nature was twisted but the Father has granted you a free will to straighten things up. You are free personally to reestablish order, or to refuse love as many people do, and perpetuate the sin of Adam, and re-crucify Christ. The Grace of God will lead you.

I — But how should I understand that my mother bore me in sin?

Jesus Christ — Beloved, again this has nothing to do with you or your mother. Adam's sin has affected everything; no one is exempt from it. What is important is that by acknowledging this, you discover the need to be born again from above, not from the flesh but from the Spirit (5), because unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (6)

Witness — In every man there is the desire for the Good and the Beautiful, but there is also the desire for fulfilling the Self. Your work, my friend, is to turn your Self to Christ and to your neighbour. There is no need to destroy your Self, but simply, gently, straighten up that which in your Self keeps you away from Love.



... the need to be born again from above...

➤ ✠ 8 – *Behold, You love truth; You have taught me the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom.*

I — You hear my confession, Lord, and You know that I am true, without any makeup. I am sincere, but I must say that I do not always perceive all my failings. I must say also that I do not always feel sorrowful for the wrong I have done. But I know intuitively that my failings stand in the way between You and I.

Jesus-Christ — I have always known the truth of your secret heart, even when you were looking away from me. I embrace you. I do not desire the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. (7) I know your sincerity. I also know that, when it is the proper time, you will seek concrete reconciliation with the others that you have hurt.

Witness — You can already pray for them and say: Grant mercy unto those who bear hatred or enmity against me, and who revile or slander me because I have hurt them: that none of them may suffer any evil on account of me, who am impure. (8)

I — I have a question: what are the “the hidden and secret things” of Your Wisdom?

Jesus Christ — These are Mysteries that your eyes cannot see, your mind cannot understand. But your heart will experience them in a hidden way. Familiarity with the Scriptures and the Sacraments of the Church will introduce you to the spiritual sense of the Mysteries of My Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection which will make them alive in you.

► ✠ 9 – *You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be made clean; You shall wash me, and I will be made whiter than snow.*

I — Is this the time when I get purified? Sanctified?

Jesus Christ — Yes, Beloved. Confession is no longer in words; it has become an act. It is the time for the Lord to act. It is My Mercy in action. Your ascetic labour of repentance with the grace of the Spirit have changed you. You may not notice it, but I can see embers of humility and coals of love glowing in your heart.

Witness — Have you ever seen hyssop? Hyssop is a medicinal plant. It is a symbol of humility because it is very small, and also a symbol of self-discipline because it can grow on rocks. The smallest plant, hyssop, can change the whole world.

I — I have read in the Scriptures (9) that hyssop was dipped in the blood of sacrifices and sprinkled on lepers to heal them. O Lord, is this a figure –an image– of Your precious Blood removing the stains of my sin?

Jesus Christ — Yes, you have been washed in My blood. You will be clothed in the white robes of the saints, which are surpassed only by the whiteness of Light (10). Not only for wiping your sins away but also for your sanctification, so that you may enter into the contemplation of divine love.

The Choir sings — For a people who walked in distress and darkness, there will be a great light; and upon those who dwelt in the country of the shadow of death a light will shine. (11)



Washed by the Blood of the Lamb

(1) Wisdom 10:1 (2) Psalm 89 (3) Psalm 138 (4) Rom 5:12 (5) John 1:13 (6) John 3:3-5 (7) Ezekiel 18:32 (8) Prayer before Communion by St John Damascene (9) Leviticus 14:6 (10) Mt 13:43 (11) Isaiah 8:21-9:6