UNIT 3B: PASTORAL AND ASCETICAL THEOLOGY

71: Reconciliation

On account of the vast scope of this topic, this lecture is limited to the developments in the Christian East and West from the New Testament to the growth of Celtic Christianity. It considers the theology and practice of reconciliation and does not examine the rites of reconciliation themselves.

Throughout Christendom, pastoral theology "is distinguished from Biblical, dogmatic and moral theology by its primary concern for discovering how theological understandings can find appropriate practical expression in the concrete, empirical situation of the church and the world."[1] In Orthodoxy, asceticism and the theological reflection linked to its pursuit is understood "as that way of life which prepares one for the Kingdom of God through the training and conditioning of the whole human person—body and soul—towards a Godly life and its exercise in virtue."[2] Therefore, the linking of pastoral theology and ascetical theology considers how both the Church and the person can be one with the Lord. Because prayer is the primary path to such oneness with the Lord, this lecture includes numerous prayers.

Repentance and Reconciliation, Sin and Confession: Apostolic Practice and Beyond

It is essential to emphasise the overwhelming significance of the teaching and practice of Christ concerning the Church's ministry of reconciliation from the earliest period. Both Jew and Gentile alike had either experienced the reconciling love of God in the work of Christ by knowing our Lord in the flesh, or like St Paul, had encountered that first-hand from the risen Christ. A prayer from the ancient Spanish liturgy, "retaining traces of early Celtic worship," expresses the cosmic dimensions of reconciliation in that through Jesus Christ the earth is reconciled to heaven:

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[1] R. J. Turner, "Pastoral Theology" in Alan Richardson & John Bowden (Eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 428-430.

[2] Father M. C. Steenberg, "Asceticism" in John Anthony McGuckin (Ed.), *The Concise Encyclopedia of Orthodox Christianity* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), pp. 44-45.

O God, by your great love for us you have reconciled earth to heaven through your only-begotten Son: grant that we, who by the darkness of our sins are turned aside from love for each other, may be filled with your Spirit shed abroad in us, and embrace our friends in you and our enemies for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.[3]

This cosmic reconciliation of earth to heaven has a deeply personal dimension, as St Gregory, a late 6th century bishop in Sicily, prayed:

O good Jesu, word of the Father, the brightness of the Father's glory, whom angels desire to behold, teach us to do your will, that guided by your good Spirit, we may come to that blessed city where there is everlasting day and all are of one spirit, where there is certain security and secure eternity and quiet felicity and happy sweetness and sweet pleasantness, where you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, are alive and reign, one God for ever and ever. Amen.[4]

That search for "certain security and secure eternity" in life and in death, within ourselves and in our relationships with others, catches the essence of reconciliation.

From the very beginning, sin was something that had to be dealt with either in someone coming to know Christ and receiving Him as Lord and Saviour or in the lapse of a Christian already baptised who had succumbed to sin. Sins before baptism could be confessed and readily forgiven with true repentance. Christ himself had committed to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops and presbyters, the authority to retain or forgive sins, to bind or to loose (John 20:23). Sins committed after baptism, however, were a different matter altogether for an ungodly element was now present within the Body of Christ itself. This infection was regarded with utmost seriousness by the early Church for it threatened to compromise not only the salvation of the person concerned, but also the witness in holiness of the Church to a pagan world.

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[3] Michael Counsell, *Two Thousand Years of Prayer* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1999), p. 85.
[4] Counsell, p. 108.

Therefore, two elements in the Church's ministry of reconciliation emerged from the earliest period: the first concerned the restoration of that person to God, the second, his or her readmission to Eucharistic fellowship in the local church. From the New Testament period itself, we learn that sins were dealt with in different ways according to their severity. *In extremis*, expulsion from the Christian community itself might be necessary—meaning more or less permanent excommunication. The classic text in this regard is 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 where St Paul deals with a case of incest in the Church of Corinth. The text is worth quoting in full because it clearly describes the practice of the early Church when dealing with a serious sin within the Christian community:

> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So, when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard

or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. 'Expel the wicked person from among you.'

To summarise:

1. Apostolic judgement is the guide as to what should be done in any given situation (v. 3). This is the basis for the subsequent development of the penitentiary canons.

2. Unrepentant sinners who persist in sin which if left unchecked would compromise their salvation, must, for their own good, be expelled from the Christian community (vs. 5, 13). There must be no fellowship between such persons and any baptised Christian (v. 11). Effectively these are returned to Satan's dominion (the world outside the Church) in the hope that they might eventually repent and be saved. Expulsion, therefore, was seen as instrumental to salvation and not merely as a punishment.

3. The theology and practice of Church discipline is geared toward maintaining the integrity of its witness in holiness of life, both personal and communal (vs. 6-8). To sin is to sin against God _and_ one's brothers and sisters. Participation in the Eucharist is a participation in Christ who died to save the world, thereby creating a new community regenerated by his saving love. Violation of the life in Christ, (which is what sin is), is a flat denial of salvation and by such actions a sinner excludes himself.

Sometimes in extreme situations God intervenes before even the Church has time to act; the classic instance of this, of course, being the death of Ananias and Sapphira who dropped down dead on the spot for concealing monies which they ought to have handed over to the Apostles for contribution to the poor (Acts 5). However, much more difficult to deal with are those sins which do not warrant expulsion but which nonetheless the Church must deal with if her children are to be maintained on their path to salvation and if the holiness of life of the Christian

community is to be defended in practical terms. How this worked out in practice is a substantial consideration of this lecture from apostolic times to the fall of Rome.

Any renewal, whether personal or communal, depends upon the eradication of sin. In the first century, St Clement of Rome set out how forgiveness of sins required a personal trust in God:

> You, Lord God, . . . are always trustworthy, you judge fairly, excellent and marvellous in your power, wise in creating and careful to make firm what you have made, blessing us with the visible creation and dependable for those who trust in You, merciful and compassionate. Forgive us our sins and our shortcomings, our breaking of Your laws and our lack of righteousness. We are your servants; do not blame us for all that we have done wrong, but make us clean with your Truth, and guide our steps to walk in holiness and righteousness and singleness of heart, that we may do those good things which will please you. . . . Lord, make your face to shine upon us in peace, for our good, that we may be sheltered by Your mighty hand and set free from the consequences of sin by the power of Your arm. . . .[5]

Many of us do seek to be servants of the Lord; however, to achieve such a goal, we must seek forgiveness of our sins in order to be made "clean with [the] Truth [of Christ]," so that the Lord can then "guide our steps to walk in holiness and righteousness and singleness of heart," moulding our lives to His purposes.

Sin after Baptism

The New Testament

There are numerous different positions and emphases in the New Testament concerning sin after baptism which map the permissible extent of both the rigour and the economy that will later characterise Church praxis. These may be summarised in tabular form:

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[5] *First Epistle of Clement 60.* Cited by Counsell, p. 8.

New Testament Reference	Teaching on sin after baptism
The Synoptic Gospels and the Unforgiveable Sin (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29 and Luke 12:10	Our Lord seems to have in mind those who have repented and believed in the gospel but who have then apostatised by an outright and entrenched rejection of the offer of salvation. They have effectively excluded themselves.
"The sin that leads to death" (1 John 5:14-17)	Probably the same as the unforgiveable sin (*ante*) but unspecified.
Hebrews and Apostasy (Hebrews 6:4-8 & 10:26-31	References not clear … "fall away" "trample underfoot" … psychological non-specifics for apostasy.
St. Matthew and unlimited reconciliation (18:15-25)	Process Escalation: - (1) Private confrontation (2) Witnessed rebuke (3) Confession to the church (4) Expulsion Note: apostolic power to bind and to loose (cf. John 20:23)
Other witnesses to unlimited reconciliation	James 1:21, 5:19-20; 2 Peter 3:9; St. Luke (general tenor of this gospel on forgiveness); Revelation 2:5, 14-16, 20-22, 3:1-5, 15-19.

The Fathers from the 2nd to 4th Century

In times of persecution and fervent eschatological expectation the unity of Christ's Body granted to the Church a vivid sense of the destructive capacities of unresolved sin within the Christian community. It was intolerable that such sins should be overlooked, because of the increase that such sins would bring to heresy, apostasy and internal dissension within the Church. The latter sin had afflicted the Church at Corinth almost from the time it had been founded by St Paul. His successor, St

Clement, had to deal with a similar situation. St Clement was quite clear in his Letter to the Corinthians that unity must be regained by the public repentance of trouble makers before those whom they have offended, in this case, the presbyters (57:1). Reconciliation was to be achieved by admonition, compassionate correction and intercessory prayer.

Although St Ignatios of Antioch advised communities under his care to shun certain sinners, his warnings did not go beyond the limits established by St Paul or St John.[6] The Letter of St Polycarp, disciple of St John the Theologian, insisted that every effort should be made to reclaim those who have sinned after baptism to preserve the integrity of the community.[7] The Didache, (the Teaching [of the 12 Apostles]), followed the Lord's teaching that those who are alienated from each other should not present their gift at the altar until they have been reconciled.[8] This was the clear context for the Kiss of Peace before the anaphora in the Eucharist to which the First Apology of St Justin Martyr attests in the mid second century.[9]

In the second century, a minority rigorist position opposed what it saw to be a far too lax policy applied to those who had sinned in any manner after baptism. This should be seen in the context of a weakening expectation of the imminent Parousia and, therefore, the greater possibilities of moral laxity and even recidivism. The Shepherd of Hermas opposed these rigorist disciplinary responses in his extant letter. Nonetheless this shows that the Church was now having to work out a clearer penitential practice with respect to the lapsed, the backsliders and the recidivists out of pastoral necessity. The mid-second century also witnessed more hostile persecution in the Empire against Christians; and the Church had to work out its position concerning those who had denied their faith to save themselves from

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[6] Smyrnaeans 4:1, 7:2; Ephesians 7:1.
[7] 11:4.
[8] *The Didache* 14:1-2. Cf. Gospel of St Matthew 5:23-24.
[9] 65:2.

martyrdom but who afterwards sought readmission to the Church and her Eucharistic fellowship.

The Church responded with more formal provision for catechesis for converts and then a more comprehensive and liturgically controlled system of penitential rehabilitation for the lapsed. This tension between the Church's commitment to purity and the need to forgive some of its members after they had repented has been well-summarised by Father John Anthony McGuckin in *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture:*

> If the earliest ecclesiastical policy of admitting no post-baptismal repentance of the most serious sins served to express the [C]hurch's deep sense of its necessary purity, the refusal to deal with sinners in the assembly seemed to compromise that purity, not enhance it [—] to compromise it by not being faithful to the law of Jesus himself, who had configured the [C]hurch as a communion of the reconciled and the forgiven. And so, by the early third century (and hastened onwards by the problem of those who had lapsed in times of persecution), the [C]hurch's leaders instituted a system of public penance. The bishops at large, and despite many protest voices that they had opened the doors to laxity, began to exercise their apostolic charism to dispense this mystery of repentance.[10]

This third century resolution of how to resolve the tension between sin and forgiveness is still influential today:

> By the third century the presbyter Origen described the practice of his Palestinian Church as follows: 'In more serious offences the opportunity for penance is granted only once. But as regards more commons sins, which we frequently commit, these can always be remitted by penance.'[11]

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[10] McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church* (Chichester, West Sussex: 2011), p. 302f.
[11] McGuckin, p. 373, note 141.

Some within this developing situation took a stronger more rigorist approach, notably Tertullian (160-220 AD) who eventually embraced the Montanist heresy, which amongst many other heterodox novelties, supposed that there were some sins that God through the Church could not forgive and that these permanently excluded the perpetrator. The only hope such a person had was in lifelong repentance outside the Church until death when mercy might be granted. Tertullian hardened his position in Carthage in reaction to a bishop (possibly Aggripinus) who had declared that he would reconcile sinners guilty of adultery and fornication. At this stage, it was the bishop and the bishop alone who could restore a person who had been excommunicated. If the rigorists therefore demurred concerning the bishop's policy and practice, they would likely as not go into schism and insist that only the Spirit in the Church (which usually meant the bishops of their sect) retained the power to bind and to loose. This is what happened in Montanism, for example. Tertullian, even in his Orthodox phase, only allowed for <u>one</u> post-baptismal act of repentance, which, on account of its seriousness, had to be accompanied by a strict scrutiny of the penitent's way of life.[12] The rituals of repentance (exomologesis), amongst the Orthodox and heterodox alike, were public in character, the penitent in sackcloth and ashes kneeling at the entrance to the assembly (the "weepers") begging the community and its leaders for their intercession that they might be allowed to embark upon the long path of reconciliation to God and His Church. At the conclusion of a successful plea for reconciliation, sins would be confessed to the bishop and the whole community publically, and not in private, whereupon the penitent would be restored to Eucharistic fellowship.

The turbulence between the sectarian rigorists and the more lenient pastoralists in Carthage was resolved by its diocesan bishop, St Cyprian, (249 to 258 AD). The vicious Decian persecution broke out in Carthage in 250 A.D. after a 40 year lull. Apostasy was widespread. Those who would be subsequently martyred sometimes provided local presbyters with letters recommending reconciliation for those who

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[12] *On Penitence,* 9.

had lapsed. These petitions were often acceded to by local clergy far too readily and this prompted the rigorist party to demand that reconciliation should in principle be foreclosed to those who had apostatised. St Cyprian rejected both practices and insisted that reconciliation should be a possibility but only after sustained scrutiny and repentance. His mediating position, fully in accordance with the mind of the Church, might have settled the matter but for one occasion when he overreacted to the possibility of fresh persecution by accelerating the cases of those who were waiting upon a reconciliation decision. Felicissimus the deacon opposed him and went into schism. His followers elected Fortunatus as bishop in opposition to St Cyprian, while in Rome the followers of the Roman presbyter Novatian, who also refused absolution to all the lapsed, elected their man as bishop of Rome, in opposition to Cornelius. The Novatianists secured the election of a rival bishop of their own at Carthage as well, Maximus by name. The rigorist party in Carthage and Rome continued to divide the Church beyond the fourth century. In Carthage in 313 A.D. Donatus became the Bishop of the rigorist faction and for over 100 years the matter remained unresolved, despite the efforts of St Augustine and others, until 414 A.D. when all the Donatist churches were closed by imperial edict.

This bitter controversy fatally weakened the North African church and made it susceptible in later times to the rise of Islam. In Rome, however, Novatianism spurred the Church through the efforts of such bishops as St Ambrose of Milan to insist on her complete authority over sin as a matter of doctrine whilst in practice limiting that as pastoral concerns warranted. This was the Orthodox position which endured into later centuries in both the East and the West. There were, however, differences in terms of how this played out and it is to the Eastern tradition that we now turn for this also had a profound effect on subsequent penitential practice in the West.

It has often been observed that the Greek East differed from the Latin West in one crucial aspect. The Latin West was always more concerned with juridical status; colloquially, "who was in and who was out." The Greek East had a much more

nuanced and pastorally gradualist approach to the reconciliation of sinners, seeing this essentially as a matter of spiritual direction, albeit sometimes over a much longer period for cases of serious sin. In the third century, Clement of Alexandria and Origen are characteristic of this approach, both men declaring quite uncontroversially that no sin was ever beyond redemption. Clement even saw reconciliation as the work of God in the community as a whole and allowed for restoration through gifted lay directors and not only by bishops and their appointed presbyters. Origen had a slightly more strict approach in that he emphasised the public process for some sins, the exclusive role of the bishop in reconciliation and that there were cases where repentance after baptism was only possible once. Nonetheless, as previously noted Origen also followed the general Eastern pattern of a more pastoral approach which included recommending sinners to consult with their clergy privately on how their sin might be resolved, since the public process was invariably initiated by others who had become aware of some scandal requiring resolution.

An invaluable North Syrian document from the first part of the third century, the Didaskalia, shows a well-developed penitential system but with little or no sign of the rigorism that had disunited the West. The bishop was the primary agent of reconciliation but not without his presbyters and the whole congregation whose scrutiny, prayer and support was aimed at a realistic and staged process of rehabilitation. The period of penance was itself quite short, a matter of a few weeks, and at the end of this time those to be restored would have hands laid upon them by the bishop. Interestingly, a special role was accorded to the widows who also prayed over the penitents. This emphasis on personal spiritual direction enabled the East to move quite seamlessly and without controversy into a more one-to-one resolution of sin between a penitent and his or her confessor or spiritual guide. Clearly, in this regard the East was being influenced by the monastic practice of spiritual counsel, the West receiving monasticism only somewhat later. Father James Dallen, a Roman Catholic priest, declares: "The churches of the East not only

seem more lenient than those of the West but also more able to have a public discipline and ritual without embarrassing and discouraging penitents."[13]

From Constantine to the Fall of Rome and the Rise of Celtic Monasticism

In the West, particularly after the Edict of Milan (313 AD), the toleration of Christianity and its eventual establishment in the Empire later in the fourth century radically changed the character of Christian belonging. Now no longer persecuted, the Church assumed a public role and the catechumenate just could not cope with so many people, who for good reasons and not so good reasons, wanted to join the Church. The sense of the Church being a society set apart from the world weakened as did the understanding of sin as alienation from the Body of Christ as well as from God. The Christian East had paved the way for confession to be seen for all but the most serious sins as a private ministry between the penitent and the priest. In the West, on account of its more juridical approach, this more private practice of penance facilitated an approach to sin which saw it as an infringement of the canonical norms of Christian life, hence the development of elaborate penitentiaries by bishops who wished to guide their priests in the pastoral discipline of their flocks. In the East the enduring connection between confession and spiritual guidance ensured a continuing more holistic understanding of reconciliation as divine therapy and restoration rather than "doing time" for some misdemeanour or infringement of divine law. In both East and West, monasticism now functioned as a witness to the evangelical life of total dedication to God that the abatement of the fires of persecution had now weakened in the churches of the cities.

An issue which affected both East and West was the thorny problem of consistency in penitential discipline across the Church. A burgeoning corpus of canon law sought to standardise practice and eliminate the damage done by arbitrary episcopal decisions. Canon 53 of the Synod of Elvira and Canon 16 of the Synod of Arles

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[13] *The Reconciling Community*: The Rite of Penance (Pueblo, CO: Pueblo Books, 1986).

required the same Bishop who had excommunicated penitents to reconcile them. Canon 5 of the Council of Nicaea required the bishops to meet twice a year to review and harmonise their practice. However, these necessary measures tended to throttle the freedom of bishops to respond pastorally to different local situations; and St Augustine argued for more flexibility. The saint developed a system in his own diocese of categorising sins according to their severity and the healing measures required to deal with these. In this he emphasised the traditional parallel between formation in the catechumenate and re-formation in the confessional. With, however, the disappearance of the catechumenate and the greater prevalence of infant baptism the link between initiation and reconciliation was weakened and penance then began to upstage baptism, particularly in the West. Public reconciliation lingered on in North Africa as might be expected from its more rigorist historical legacy. The Fall of Rome to barbarian invaders brought chaos to the West but by this time its penitential practice had more or less ossified into a juridical forensic form, little used by a Christian population who had been alienated from its historical roots in the classical, Eucharistic and ecclesiastical consciousness.

In the East, again unsurprisingly, the more gentle pastoral approach prevailed and developed with one-to-one confession, spiritual direction and prayer receiving new emphasis. St John Chrysostom in a homily on repentance spoke of the church building as a physician's office, not a court room, a place of forgiveness where God heals and restores.[14] His practice in the confessional was to offer restoration without limit and he even prescribed private confession for a few days before receiving Holy Communion for those unwilling to undergo formal canonical discipline. This is consistent, of course, with his insistence on the weekly reception of Holy Communion, a standard the Christian East has not always observed in subsequent centuries! In order to facilitate the spiritual guidance of his people,

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[14] See http://earlychurchtexts.com/public/john_chrysostom_homily_ix_on_repentance.htm .
See also Robert Allen Krupp, *Shepherding the Flock of God: The Pastoral Theology of John Chrysostom*. American University Studies, Series 7: Theology & Religion (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1992).

very wisely, St John Chrysostom delegated spiritual direction to his priests and reserved public penance only for the most serious of sins. Famously of course he was much more inclined to reprimand the Imperial Court publicly rather than the poor! As Constantinople rose to prominence even as old Rome fell, the Christian East was able to retain much more of the original therapeutic tradition; and this also had a surprising impact on the development of Christianity much further afield … in Ireland! Having said that, something was lost in the translation and Celtic practice developed idiosyncratically.

Even as canonical penance withered on the vine in the West as Rome fell, a pastoral renaissance occurred in Ireland through its famed contact with Egyptian monasticism.[15] This renaissance spread through the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon missions to Britain as a whole and then to continental Europe, profoundly affecting the subsequent development of penance and reconciliation in the Christian West. Briefly, the Celtic monks in Ireland appropriated the Eastern monastic emphasis on one-to-one spiritual direction as the context for reconciliation. This seemed most natural to them on account of the prominence of the Celtic monastery which lay at the heart of Christian life and mission, even more so than the diocese and its bishop, both of which remained canonically secure but not as effective. From this time private auricular confession to a priest became the norm in the West. However, the Celtic tradition did not also take to itself the Eastern emphasis on reconciliation to the Eucharistic community. Irish Christianity in the social context of the clan with its legal and hierarchical ethos and structure emphasised rather the consequences of violating divine law and the need for restitution, a common Western theme, although in this case, hardly Roman! Despite the fact that the West remained Orthodox at this time, this contribution of the Celtic and then Saxon missionaries was to reintroduce and entrench in the Western Christian mind the idea that confession was essentially a private matter between the individual and God presided over by the Church in a formal, juridical and forensic manner. Sadly,

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[15] Father Gregory Telepneff, *The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs* (Etna, CA: Centre for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2001).

therefore, we must conclude that however laudable the Celtic tradition was and is from an Orthodox point of view, in matters concerning confession that tradition has distorted the subsequent development of the Christian West. Even the introduction of indulgences can be traced to this source. Therefore, the fall of Rome is the point of divergence on confession between West and East, not the Great Schism.

Conclusion: Beyond Celtic Monasticism

The focus of this lecture solely on the early centuries of the Church is justified by the fact that the Orthodox approach to repentance today retains the characteristics of these earlier years. Andre Psarev of St Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary in Pennsylvania, has pointed out that in contemporary usage:

> In Orthodox thought repentance is the blessed mourning of a person and longing for God (*penthos*) following after a sense of having moved away from Him. It is a conversion to God and, as a result, is what scripture describes as radical change of mind or heart (*metanoia*, see Mark 1:15). Christ came to save sinners having called them to repentance and belief in his gospel (Mark 9:13).[16]

These New Testament roots of the pastoral theology of reconciliation and repentance are especially evident in the parable of the prodigal son in the Gospel of St Luke 15:11 which sets out a process of repentance that was followed in the early Church and is still followed today: "contrition, aversion from sin, repudiation of evil, confession, reconciliation with God and one's neighbour."[17]

Contrary to the contemporary Roman Catholic emphasis on the mediating role of the priest, it is important to recognise that: "It is Christ Himself who receives the believer's repentance. The priest, acting as confessor, is only a witness, a spiritual therapist who gives advice, or who may prescribe a penitential remedy

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[16] Andrei Psarev, "Repentance," in John Anthony McGuckin (Ed.), *The Concise Encyclopedia of Orthodox Christianity*, p. 381.
[17] Psarev, p. 381.

(*epitimion*)."[18] Thus for the Orthodox Church, throughout its history in the midst of many cultures, "Repentance is not simply a matter of rejecting sin and leading a life of virtue, but rather a transformation that helps the person to discover in the soul's depths the very likeness of God."[19] This pastoral transformation is founded in a personal asceticism that reaches out to change not only the person, but the culture in which the changing personal life is being lived. So be it!

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[18] Psarev, p. 381.
[19] Psarev, p. 381.