

Thursday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 7,36-50): One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to share his meal, so He went to the Pharisee's home and as usual reclined on the sofa to eat. And it happened that a woman of this town, who was known as a sinner, heard that He was in the Pharisee's house. She brought a precious jar of perfume and stood behind him at his feet, weeping. She wet his feet with tears, she dried them with her hair and kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them.

The Pharisee who had invited Jesus was watching and thought, «If this man were a prophet, he would know what sort of person is touching him; isn't this woman a sinner?». Then Jesus spoke to the Pharisee and said, «Simon, (...) I tell you, her sins, her many sins, are forgiven, because of her great love. But the one who is forgiven little, has little love» (...).

The Sacrament of Penance: the reality of sin in the light of God's infinite mercy

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, an uninvited and unexpected guest entered from the back of the room: a well-known prostitute. One can understand the embarrassment of those present, which did not seem, however, to bother the woman. She came forward and stopped at Jesus' feet. She had heard his words of pardon and hope for all, even prostitutes. She bathed Jesus' feet with tears, wiped them dry with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with fragrant ointment. By so doing, the sinner woman wanted to express her love for and gratitude to the Lord with gestures that were familiar to her, although they were censured by society.

It is necessary to assist those who confess to experience that divine tenderness to

repentant sinners which many Gospel episodes portray with tones of deep feeling. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, whatever the sin committed, if it is humbly recognized and the person involved turns with trust to the priest-confessor, he or she never fails to experience the soothing joy of God's forgiveness.

—God forgives all to those who love much.