Thursday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 7:36-50): A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon... I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little" ...

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.