

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Sep 9th 2016

Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, Priest

I believe anyone who engages in honest self-examination who reads today's Gospel must feel at least a twinge of regret for actions taken in one's own life. In my case, it's more than a twinge — it's veritably a knife to the heart.

I can be extremely quick to judge the actions of others yet blind to those or worse faults of my own. I won't bother trying to list all of the times this has occurred. You probably don't have all day to devote to reading this reflection. But in general I can be easily wounded by criticism, but all too willing to deploy my sharp tongue on others.

For a good deal of my adult life I was one of those Catholics who made sort of a pro forma confession during Advent and Lent and sometimes not even then. I viewed the Sacrament of Reconciliation as being sort of scary. But one New Year's Day I made one of those rare resolutions that stuck. I was going to start going to Reconciliation at least once a month and hopefully more often than that.

I found that going when I didn't feel pressured into it that it was a tremendously uplifting experience and by not waiting too long between confessions I could be more honest about my sins and shortcomings. In other words, with a little help I actually could get the plank out of my eye, at least for awhile.

If you're like I was for far too long and seldom in the confessional I suggest just going one week. It helps me to get my thoughts together before I go in. Sometimes I'll make notes. It has made a big difference in my life.

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