

## My Lenten Journey in 2021

*“Initially, men are made new by the rebirth of baptism.*

*“Yet there still is required a daily renewal to repair the shortcomings of our mortal nature, and whatever degree of progress has been made there is no one who should not be more advanced.*

*“All must therefore strive to ensure that **on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.**” — Pope St. Leo the Great*

This quote is from the Office of Readings in the Breviary for Thursday after Ash Wednesday. Even though I have read it yearly for over 30 years, this year 2021 the light turned on for me in the last sentence, that *“on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.”*

Occasionally God grants me and other souls in whom His Spirit dwells the gift of **compunction**, the recalling of past sins that have been confessed, absolved, repented, abandoned, for which penance has been done and indulgences received that take away the temporal punishment which remained after sin.

The purpose of this recall is so that the *“sins of the former life”* not be committed again through the grace of God in making the Christian aware of his human weakness and of God’s grace and mercy to guide every moment of life for the believer.

**Compunction** derives from “puncture”, a deflating such as an over inflated balloon that had puffed itself up too much, traveled too high for its own good, and then descends to the earth where, unable to rise again on its own, it is then inflated sufficiently in order to rise through humility and grace to a level above the earth desired by God for that soul.

The sins recalled are both sins of commission and sins of omission: sins by which I might have led others to err by my

words and actions, sins where I neglected to say or do what Jesus prompts a believer to do in conscience at that moment.

The compunction disturbed me until I read the words of Leo the Great, *“All must therefore strive to ensure that **on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.**”*

Now I understand **compunction** as gift rather than punishment or curse. It is the Divine Assistance in my conscience Who is showing me the areas of my human weakness where I have failed and could fail again without sincere cooperation with the grace of God.

*“Yet there still is required a daily renewal to repair the shortcomings of our mortal nature, and whatever degree of progress has been made there is no one who should not be more advanced.*

The daily renewal to repair requires a daily engagement of my personal relationship with Jesus in ACTS: prayers of adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and supplication, so that I am aware that it is only through His grace and mercy that I am raised above the dust from which I am formed and to that dust to which I shall return, even though I have a founded hope in the resurrected body and heavenly life when Jesus comes again.

The daily renewal happens with the gift of grace: **sanctifying** grace, the presence and power of God dwelling in me to make me holy as the Father is holy, and **actual** grace, the presence and power of Jesus that urges me to do the good and shun evil in charity.

These two quotes are from our Holy Father Pope Francis’ Ash Wednesday homily 2021:

*“Heartfelt conversion, with the deeds and practices that express it, is possible only if it begins with the primacy of God’s work. What enables us to*

*return to him is not our own ability or merit, but his offer of grace.”*

*“The beginning of the return to God is the recognition of our need for him and his mercy, the need for his grace. This is the right path, the path of humility.”*

In my old age I am understanding in a deeper way God’s mercy and care for my soul. After my initial rebirth, God assists me with the daily renewal to repair my shortcomings. He does so with the grace of compunction and mercy “to ensure that **on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his [my] former life.**”

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you Holy Spirit. Jesus, I trust in You.

— *Fr. Richard Perozich*