

Talk to P3 Parents

What is Sin?

The Word 'Sin' is not commonly used in our society today. In fact, some people even avoid using the word altogether. The danger is, that when we deny there is any such thing as sin in the world; we make the world a more dangerous place for everyone.

When we do use the word, 'Sin' we are confronting the reality of evil in life. We are facing up to that which is ungodly, that which is against the teaching of Jesus Christ.

In the Book of *Genesis*, the account of Adam and Eve, we have a couple who live in Paradise, and that Paradise will continue as long as they don't disobey the commandments of God - 'Sin' then is a fall from *Grace*.

'Sin' then is, when we know the truth but we choose freely to disobey the truth, to go against the will of God and carry out an action or motive that is possibly harmful to others and also to myself. Sin, in a sense breaks down the relationship of pure love and trust between myself and Jesus.

When Judas Iscariot sat at table, for the Last Supper with the other apostles, it seemed from the outside that all was well, however, in his heart Judas had already made up his mind to betray Jesus and hand him over to be crucified.

Now, when it comes to your own dear children, I am not suggesting that they are, at 7 years old, ready to commit sins on the scale of Judas Iscariot. Its interesting that the Stigma of Judas' sins are so great to this day. I have never baptised a child with the name if 'Judas'.

However, when you had your child baptised, you made a promise as parents, on their behalf, to renounce evil and teach them the commandments of Jesus. You know that you are the first teachers

of your child in all things, spiritual, moral and educational. They will look to you to give them the example of what is right and what is wrong and sinful. If you use bad language in front of them, they will copy you. If you are dishonest, they will do the same. If you are greedy or selfish, then they will adapt the same attitude over time.

While you have their trust and confidence, it's very important that you help them to form their conscience; that you explain to them simply, but wisely, that it is not good to steal, or to tell lies, or to be nasty to their brother or sister. That you also help them to see that when we say sorry for our sins and really mean it; then we can be united again in love, and move forward in renewed confidence. Give them a loving hug when hurt is resolved.

The stories/parables like the Prodigal son in Luke's Gospel, explain beautifully the power of God's merciful and forgiving love, but all of this mercy can only happen when we are truly sorry for our sins. You, as parents, need to witness to your children, the experience of forgiveness for sins in the home. Let your children see you asking for forgiveness and receiving it for our own sins. When you say sorry to your husband or wife for being home late or forgetting to buy fish for supper.

The most powerful example of seeking forgiveness for sins, is when you come to Confession yourselves, when your children see you coming to the church and asking God to forgive you for your sins. Help your child to see that the mercy of God is there for all the baptised as long as we are truly sorry and want to start afresh in our lives. The biggest danger to our morality in society today is a lack of a sense of sin; a culture where everyone blames everyone else, no one takes responsibility for their actions, and there's always an excuse for sin, despite how serious the crime is. The biggest favour you can do for your child is to help them to have a good conscience and help them to be honest enough to seek forgiveness for their sins. Dealing with sin, is like dealing with money, if you deal

with the small sins in life, you'll never commit bigger ones, if you look after pennies in this life then you won't have to worry about the pounds as well.

Lastly, listen carefully to the one prayer that Jesus gave us, The Our Father, where he states very clearly in that short prayer, not to commit sin, to grant us forgiveness and to deliver us from evil. Jesus knows that sin and evil destroy many good people and therefore it is so important that we allow God to rescue us, by his Cross and Passion, from the sins of the world.

God Bless you ALL,

Canon Jeremy Bath