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8 MONDAY

MONDAY, 32nd WEEK of the YEAR

Titus 1: 1-9

Ps 23: 1-6

Luke 17: 1-6

The past number of years have seen many scandals uncovered involving clergy and religious, in a number of different countries. No doubt the church has suffered greatly from this, and people's faith and trust has been sorely tested or shaken. Bishops have not always been wise in knowing how to deal with the situation, and there is an angry vengeful public reaction against the church in certain places. All of us are affected and hurt by these happenings, and it's a challenge how we personally react and cope. No matter how shocking, however, we shouldn't really be surprised that scandals do happen: Jesus said they would, and history records them. They always cause damage, whether they're great and public or small and maybe minor. But what is a Christian response, especially towards the scandal-maker? "If he repents", Jesus said, "forgive him". But do we really do this? Do we have compassion on the sinner while condemning his/her sin? Love and prayer are the antidotes to the hurt and anger we feel, and to the shaking of our faith that our anger, disgust and shock may create. No wonder His apostles asked Jesus "Increase our faith". Let us pray for those who have caused the scandal, that they may sincerely repent; pray as well for their victims and for all whose lives and faith have been damaged. Christian forgiveness and reconciliation must be there, together with the administration of justice and recompense. Mercy and love are attributes of God: in this too we must become like Him.

"God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm and evil"

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