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We've all heard of Leonard Cheshire. During the war he was awarded the Victoria Cross after completing a hundred bombing missions on heavily defended targets which would inevitably have involved cutting short the lives of many innocent people. After the war with his wife Sue Ryder he established foundations for the sick and disabled. We've all heard of the Cheshire homes. I wonder was this his way of making up for his particular involvement in the war?

I tell this story because to a lesser degree Zachaeus fully intended to make recompense for things which he got up to in his past as a collector of taxes. He tells Jesus he is willing to give half his money to the poor and pay back the people he had wronged.

Does we every try and make up for things we're not proud of in our past? November is designated by the Church as a month of prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Purgatory makes sense because even though people have repented of their sins in this life they've not fully taken on board the consequences of their actions. This could apply to fathers, and sometimes mothers who were too busy or weren't even there to bond with their children when they were growing up. Now that their children are young adults, these same parents may have a conscience about this and endeavour to show their offspring a side to their character that they missed out on as children.

Another example might be If I gave my parents a hard time when growing up, my conscience may be telling me that I show them extra love as they get older. If they ask me to go that proverbial 'one mile' with them, with a willing heart, I will go two.

I'll go even further and anticipate their needs sparing them the uneasiness of having to ask me.

Some non-Catholic Christians used often tease us Catholics about running back and forth to confession while at the same time not facing up to the consequences of our failures. They might have a point. Confession, which is gone out of fashion for many, is the first vital stage of the reconciliation process but not the full picture. Conversion involves a change of heart with a strong desire to atone for the times we've let people down. It's taking on board the commandment of God to love our neighbour as ourselves.

I know Jesus atoned for all our sins on the Cross but he offers us the opportunity to be part of that expiation. At Mass we become one with Him in His offering of Himself to the Father.

For a small man, Zacchaeus must have felt ten foot tall when Jesus ended up in his house for lunch. Jesus is with me today in this Mass – He comes to my house in Holy Communion and sees all my efforts to atone for my sins and, like Zacchaeus, experience his salvation.