

CONFESSIONORUPENITENCE

One of the Sacraments, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, also adopted by the Anglican Church, by the Lutheran church, among others

1st Epistle of Rev. John 1: 7 to 9. "If, however, we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This epistle was written to Christians, people already converted. At the end, the Apostle takes his leave saying: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols".

According to the text, we are all in the condition of sinners. We weren't just before converting. We continue to be.

Therefore, we need to confess our sins to be forgiven and purified by the Lord.

Still, in the **1st Epistle of John 3: from 7 to 9**, we learn the following: "Little children, do not let yourselves be deceived by anyone; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Whoever practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested; to destroy the works of the devil.

Everyone who is born of God does not live in the practice of sin; for what abides in him is the divine seed; but he cannot go on sinning, because he is born of God."

One might think that there is a contradiction between the first and second texts.

But, in fact, what the two texts teach us, is that there is a difference between being a sinner (1st), and living in sin (2nd).

A sinner is one who sins, confesses his sin, repents and leaves it.

Those who live sinning, do not confess, do not repent and do not leave the sin.

Or you confess, but you don't regret it and don't let it.

Or still, confess and repent, but don't let it.

But, confess to whom?

To the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, in prayer.

We can also confess our sins to Priests, Pastors. We know that the church, including ecclesiastical authorities, represent, or rather are, the body of Christ in this world.

The bible teaches us, in **James 5:16**, the following: "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous can do much because of its efficacy".

In his First Epistle, in Chapter **5, v. 16, App. John** wrote to us: "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he will ask, and God will give him life, to those who do not sin leading to death. There are sins unto death, and for that I say not pray.

All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not unto death."

The Ap. James teaches us to confess our sins to one another, and Rev. John already guides us in case we see our brother sinning.

So, based on the text of Ap. James, someone can understand and say that we should confess our sins to a brother when we sin against that brother. After all, everyone recognizes that we shouldn't open up our lives, expose our weaknesses to anyone.

More, the App. John already directs us to intercede for our brother if we see him sinning. It doesn't say it's just when they sin against us. We even teach to evaluate whether the sin is for death or not.

Thus, we confess to the Priests, Pastors, who are the representatives of Christ in this world. How such hear and how they react to a confession is no longer for us to judge.

It turns out that, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, priests not only hear confession, but also forgive sins.

Many have great difficulty accepting this.
As? Only God can forgive sins.

We know that the church has authority. The Lord Jesus said to Rev. Peter, representing the church, that whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; what you agree on earth will be agreed in heaven. Even so, we tend to believe that sins are forgiven only by God.

There is a biblical text that clarifies this situation; it is in the gospel of **John 20: 19 to 23**. "On the evening of that day, the first of the week, when the doors of the house where the disciples were were locked, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, stood in the midst, and said to them : Peace be with us!

And saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. Therefore, the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus therefore said to them again: Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, so have I send you.

And having said this, he breathed on them and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain them, they are retained.

Again, one might say: In this case, it would be to forgive the sins of those who perchance have sinned against them.

The fact is that before being crucified and dying, the Lord Jesus, on another occasion, had already responded to Ap. Peter that it was necessary to forgive his neighbor seventy times seven. I also didn't say it was to forgive just a few.

Here's another precious text for reflection: **Luke 5: 17 to 26** . of Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

Then some men came carrying a paralytic on a bed; and they sought to bring him in and place him before Jesus.

And, not finding where to introduce him because of the crowd, going up to the roof, they let him down on the bed, between the tiles, into the middle, in front of Jesus.

Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic: Man, your sins are forgiven.

And the scribes and Pharisees reasoned, saying, Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God?

Jesus, however, knowing their thoughts, said to them: What do you reason in your heart?

Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven, or, Arise and walk?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, Arise, take up your bed, and go home.

Immediately he arose before them, and taking up the bed on which he had been lying, he returned home, glorifying God.

All were astonished, they gave glory to God and, possessed with fear, said: Today, we have seen prodigies".

Could it be that the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, when breathing on the disciples, would not have given them, by the Holy Spirit, also authority to forgive sins?

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Texts taken from the Bible, JOÃO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA version – Revised and Updated.