

Scripture & Holy Confession

Can't I just confess to God?

- 1 Timothy 2:5 “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,”
- Question is – how does Christ mediate with mankind?

...Through His Apostles

- **John 20:19-23**

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were [e]assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

*²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.** ²³ **If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.**"*

- *This Gospel passage is read for the priesthood ordination*

Prayer of Absolution

- *The priest lays his right hand on the head of the penitent and says:*
May God have mercy upon you, and may He guide you to everlasting life through the authority of priesthood **which was entrusted by our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples who, in turn, entrusted it to their successors until it was given me;** I who am weak and sinful, absolve you, brother (sister) **of all the sins that you have confessed and are repentant of them,** as well as of all the transgressions which have escaped your memory in the Name of the Father +, amen, and of the Son +, amen and of the Holy Spirit + for everlasting life. Amen.

So are we confessing just to God?

- “Confess **your trespasses to one another**, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, [\[k\]](#)fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” – James 5:16

- Public Confession

Numbers 5:5-8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶ “Speak to the children of Israel: ‘When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, **and that person is guilty,** ⁷ **then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give it to the one he has wronged.** ⁸ But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong *must go* to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement with which atonement is made for him.

Reconciliation

Sin separates us from the Body of Christ

Priest mediates in 2 ways:

- On behalf of the Church community on hearing the confession
- On behalf of Christ in granting absolution

Process of Confession

Retaining sins?

- *22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”*

1 John1:8-10

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Takeaways

- Christ establishes this authority
 - John 20:22-23
 - Authority given to the Apostolic priesthood
- Confession was originally towards the faithful
 - James 5:16
 - The priest hears on behalf of the Church Faithful
- Sacramental Holy Confession is Scriptural
 - Involves the Church which is how our Lord mediates with us