

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Can We Confess Our Sins Directly To God?

Know This...

Sin is first and foremost an offense against God; second, it harms His Church. This is why only God can forgive sin. We can confess our sins directly to God; but to receive His forgiveness, we must offer "perfect contrition": sorrow that flows from our total love for God. When we ask God to forgive our sins because we fear damnation in hell, we are offering God "imperfect contrition". Only in the Sacrament of Reconciliation can imperfect contrition bring us God's forgiveness.



John: When we say we're sorry, we want to know we're forgiven. So Jesus gave His Apostles and their successors the priestly authority to forgive sin.

James: Jesus said to the Apostles, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Mt. 18:18



John: Jesus also breathed on them and said, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Jn 20:22-23

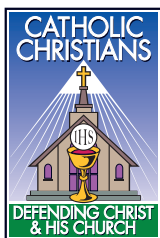
James: At sacramental confession we are called to reveal our sins, to be truly sorry for them, and to firmly resolve to avoid them in the future.

John: If we are truly sorry, whether with perfect or imperfect contrition, Jesus through His priests will forgive us the guilt of our sins.

James: While we can technically confess our sins directly to God, He wants us to encounter His forgiveness frequently in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Deacon John Beckmann and Deacon James Russell are permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

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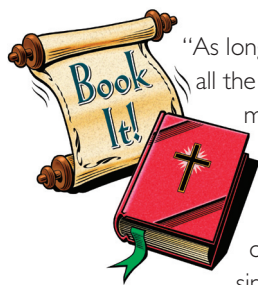


"When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'As for you, your sins are forgiven.' The scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who but God alone can forgive sins?' Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply, 'What are you thinking in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—Jesus said to the man who was paralyzed, 'I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.'" Lk. 5:20-24

"When it [contrition] arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect' (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution



to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible... The contrition called 'imperfect' (or 'attrition') is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance... Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution." CCC 1452, 1453, 1457 "I beseech you, brethren, let everyone who has sinned confess his sin while he is still in this world, while his confession is still admissible, while satisfaction and remission made through the priests are pleasing before the Lord." St. Cyprian of Carthage, 251 A.D.



"As long as I kept silent, my bones wasted away; I groaned all the day. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength withered as in dry summer heat. Then I declared my sin to you; my guilt I did not hide. I said, 'I confess my faults to the Lord,' and you took away the guilt of my sin." Ps 32:3-5 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 Jn 1:9

Almighty Father, You showed Your infinite mercy and love when you offered Your Son on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus gave His Apostles the authority to forgive our sins or to hold us bound. They passed this authority on to their successors. Open my heart, mind, and soul to Your presence that I might regularly partake of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be freed from the sins that enslave me. Grant this through Christ Jesus. Amen.

