



Confession

What is Confession?

Confession embraces two parts: the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe, that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the confessor we should confess those sins alone which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, a man-servant or maid-servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have grieved any one by words or deeds; whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted, or done other injuries.

Pray, Propose to Me a Brief Form of Confession.

Answer.

You should speak to the confessor this way: Reverend and dear sir, I beseech you to hear my confession, and to pronounce forgiveness to me for God's sake.

Proceed!

I, a poor sinner, confess myself before God guilty of all sins; especially I confess before you that I am a man-servant, a maidservant, etc. But, alas, I serve my master unfaithfully; for in this and in that I have not done what they commanded me; I have provoked them, and caused them to curse, have been negligent and permitted damage to be done; have also been immodest in words and deeds, have quarreled with my equals, have grumbled and sworn at my wife, etc. For all this I am sorry, and pray for grace; I want to do better.

A master or mistress may say:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully trained my children, domestics, and wife for God's glory. I have cursed, set a bad example by rude words and deeds, have done my neighbor harm and spoken evil of him, have overcharged and given false ware and short measure. And whatever else he has done against God's command and his station, etc. But if any one does not find himself burdened with such or greater sins, he should not trouble himself or search for or invent other sins, and thereby make confession a torture, but mention one or two that he knows. Thus: In particular I confess that I once cursed; again, I once used improper words, I have once neglected this or that, etc. Let this suffice.

But if you know of none at all (which, however is scarcely possible), then mention none in particular, but receive the forgiveness upon your general confession which you make before God to the confessor.

Then shall the confessor say:

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith! Amen.

Furthermore:

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness? Answer.

Yes, dear sir.

Then let him say:

As you believe, so be it done unto you. By the command and in the stead of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Depart in peace. But those who have great burdens upon their consciences, or are distressed and tempted, the confessor will know how to comfort and to encourage to faith with more passages of Scripture. This is to be merely a general form of confession for the unlearned.

Holy Communion

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus: *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Take, drink of it all of you. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of Me.'"*

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

That is shown us in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. Which words are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit; for the words *For you* require altogether believing hearts.