

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

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"Go and Sin no More"

Supreme evidence of God's Infinite Mercy for most of us is the Sacrament of Penance. In delegating to priests His power to forgive sins, our Lord Jesus Christ was lavish in His benevolence. He might have given this power to Peter only and to his successors. In that case we today could go to confession only to the Holy Father in Rome. This in itself would have been a great gift to sinners; but Christ in His Infinite Love and Mercy did not place these limits on the Sacrament of Penance.



Our Blessed Lord realized, moreover, that in making the forgiveness of sins so readily available, He would suffer from abuses. He knew that penitents, instead of being overawed by the delegation to mere men of the power to forgive sin, would take confession for granted. This realization did not restrain His Mercy.



It seems very unlikely that any sinner to whom Christ Himself said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" -- like Magdalen or the adulteress saved by Christ from her accusers -- ever again fell into serious sin. Yet each time we go to confession it is Christ Who absolves the sin. The priest is only His mouthpiece.

Even though our purpose of amendment may be firm enough for valid reception of the Sacrament, we are often not sufficiently impressed by God's Goodness to us to prevent relapses. We'd like to clean up our language, we're embarrassed when the Holy Name slips out in the wrong (or right) company. But our purpose of amendment is not firm enough for us to put forth the effort to break the habit. Or, we reason -- falsely in many cases -- that stealing is seldom a mortal sin because everyone has a lot of money these days and so are fainted-hearted in our resolution to stop playing Robin Hood (taking from the rich to give to the poor -- me).

In fact, sometimes temptation is succumbed to because confession is so readily available. If this thought consciously enters into our yielding to serious sin, we are also guilty of presumption -- as the fellow would be who deliberately postpones confession until Sunday morning so that without restraint he can eat, drink, and be merry on Saturday night; or the person who more readily gives in to temptation, conscious of the fact that he can run to the confessional within a few hours after his passions have been satiated.

Frequently, particularly each time we avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Penance, we should think about God's Infinite Mercy and Love. We should put ourselves in the place of one of those contemporaries of Christ who heard from His Sacred Lips, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Then, like Magdalen or the paralytic healed in body and soul, we would go and sin no more.