

THE MIRACLE OF PRIESTS FORGIVING SINS

Absolution is the rite in the Catholic Church by which the priest takes sin away in the name of God.

The priest doesn't ask God to pardon you when he absolves. He does it on his own authority for he says, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This is an extreme case of man standing in the place of God. It is blasphemy of the highest order to suggest that God would leave people at the mercy of men.

This sacrament was supposedly started by Jesus after his resurrection when he told the apostles in the John gospel that any sins they pardoned would be forgiven and any they did not forgive would not be. "If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven," Jesus said. This means if you forgive in your own name the sins will also be forgiven by God. Those theologians who deny that priests forgive in their own name do not understand Catholicism. If you don't like this doctrine that priests forgive in their own name then you need to find an interpretation of the verse that rejects the idea of priests having power to forgive sins. We will look at one in a moment.

Suppose the Catholics are right. There is no evidence that the apostles passed the power to absolve or forgive sin on or were meant to and it is possible to translate it as saying that they can only forgive sins that have been forgiven already which would mean that they are not forgiving sins in the Catholic sense. If the gospel did mean the Catholic interpretation then the problem is that only one gospel says it. It is a very serious doctrine and you need two independent eyewitnesses according to God's law.

The apostles would have been barred from the Temple for absolving sins for that was a serious blasphemy in Jewish theology. They were not barred at all which shows that they did not know of the Catholic sacrament and it is a later hoax.

It is claimed by Catholicism that Jesus gave his apostles unique guidance from the Holy Spirit so that they were covered by infallibility and could write infallible scriptures if they wanted to. If that is true then the apostles may have been given the power to read hearts. So Jesus could have meant, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven" (they are in the condition or state of being forgiven, that is they have been forgiven already and are still in a forgiven state) as in "I give you the Holy Spirit so that anybody you forgive and allow into my Church and accept is forgiven by God for you will be inspired to see that." That shows they are not causing God to forgive when they do what Jesus asked. Jesus didn't say he meant they would forgive sins in God's place as if they were God. It is totally dishonest of the Roman Catholic Church to use a text like that to bolster the outrageous claims of the Church.

There are two different kinds of forgiveness that Jesus would have believed in. There is forgiveness by the community as a community of sinners. And there is divine forgiveness, God forgiving sins. Nobody sees who God forgives so the former kind of forgiveness is necessary to have a community. Jesus then was giving the Christians authority to reject sinners and receive them back in forgiveness. It need not be an infallible authority, just an authority. Its just for order and Christ commands that it be respected.

God either forgives or he does not. If somebody said they would forgive you for doing wrong if you tasted their porridge that is not real forgiveness. A God who won't forgive until a priest does a ritual is not forgiving at all but mimicking forgiveness.