

## PRIEST AS JUDGE WHO ABSOLVES

The Catholic Church says that Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the priests and bishops. People have to confess their sins to them in confession.

If Jesus gave the priests judicial authority to forgive and retain sins then how can we explain his hatred of authoritarianism when he said that whoever would be Lord must be the servant of all? We would have to hold that the interpretation of the verse saying he gave judicial authority is faulty. If need be, we would have to hold that the text of John 20:23 which has Jesus telling the disciples whatever sins they forgive he will forgive or what sins they retain will be retained has lost its clarity or has been inaccurately preserved for us.

The Council of Trent taught infallibly that Jesus, “has left priests to represent him as presiding judges, to whom Christ’s faithful are to submit all mortal sins into which they have fallen, in order that they may pronounce sentence of sins remission or retention in virtue of the power of the keys” (14th Session, Chapter 5). It is Catholic teaching that the absolution given by priests is a judicial act – actus judicialis. Its an act that involves the priest making a judgment so it cannot be given without confession of individual sins (page 13, Penance Sacrament of Reconciliation). The Church isn’t consistent with its own teaching. Somebody comes in confessing that God cannot trust them and neither can the Church. So how can the priest be expected to pardon them just because they confess and say they are sorry? Some people like confessing – its like a boast to them. So what should happen is people confess and prove their sorrow to the priest before absolution. In a court of law, a judicial system cannot simply take people’s word for things. A system that does is not being judicial. Yet if Jesus really gave priests the power to forgive sins, Trent is right. It is wrong so he didn’t.

Nowadays the Catholic Church gives general absolution without confession in cases of necessity. Yet its own interpretation of John’s words imply that the priest has to hear the case before he can forgive for he is in the position of judge and has to decide if the penitence is real or feigned. It doesn’t take the interpretation very seriously does it and the interpretation is supposed to be infallible. And the official doctrine still is that the priest has to examine the evidence and judge (page 13, Penance, Sacrament of Reconciliation).

The priest has to spend ages with each penitent trying to judge their guilt, the degree of guilt and the sincerity of their sorrow. When you sin it is only a symptom of many other sins. For example, if I confess to an act of adultery, a mortal sin with a woman who is not my wife. It is not enough to confess that. I have to confess the first time I felt the attraction when and why I decided to do something about it. When I first kissed her and what happened after for there is a whole series of sins surrounding it. Normally small sins that I commit to encourage the adultery to happen are thereby turned into mortal sins for adultery is a serious matter. So if Jesus meant to start a sacrament based on confession and absolution we reach some ridiculous and harmful conclusions. It means that the apostles and their delegates who he commissioned to preach the gospel first and foremost were to be bogged down with this sacrament in those precarious and difficult early days. The absurdity of Jesus doing this proves that the Roman Catholic interpretation of the verse from the John gospel is wrong.

Allowing confession without absolution which has happened in the Vatican II Church is anti-Catholic and heretical. It denies the meaning of the sacrament. If the sacrament is judicial no exceptions can be made to the confession rule under any circumstances no matter how grave. It is just like if you can’t give a person a fair trial then you must give them no trial at all. The real reason the popes allow this absolution in mission countries is because their rules about priests having to be unmarried males who follow the mind of the pope completely means that only a tiny number of dysfunctional men can become priests so there aren’t enough to go round. They know this looks bad so they pretend to care about allowing the forgiveness of sins to be provided. But the power of controlling these men and making sure they have nothing in life to mean anything to them but the Church is too much for them to resist.

It gets a hundred times worse when one realises that the idea that venial sin exists is foreign to the Bible which says that even sins that do little or almost no harm are still serious hell-deserving offences – mortal sins.

For a man to decide whom God is going to forgive would be intolerable to God. God could not allow it even if he wanted to and if Jesus said he did he would have committed the only slip necessary to show he was a fraud and not from God according to the strict decree given by God in Deuteronomy 18. God would not refuse to pardon a person just because a priest or apostle did not consent to it.

For a priestly sinner who may be worse than the penitent to judge that penitent seems totally contrary to the Sermon on the Mount which forbade self-righteous judgement of other people. Some say that it is not sinful or wrong because the priest can judge for the person’s good and wish he was as holy as the person is becoming. But it is hypocrisy for anybody bad to

praise a good or better person for he is saying, "I approve of the hard work you did to become good but I am glad it was you and not me". That is really saying you don't like goodness and that it is bad for you but you are glad for somebody else to have this badness of goodness." The praise is false and deceptive and vicious and it is still judgemental. Jesus never said it was sometimes okay for an evil person to judge an evil person. He denounced it across the board. And he was right. The bad person who judges somebody as good is actually more malicious than the one who judges somebody as bad as themselves. At least the latter is not denouncing goodness.

Since the priest or minister stands in the teaching role of Christ it follows that any public sin they commit is very serious indeed. For example, if they slag somebody off it is worse than a layperson doing it for the layperson is not in the leadership role in representation of Jesus Christ and cannot transmute bread and wine into the body and blood of God. The priest or minister can turn people off the gospel and that is chiefly why it is such a serious sin. And it mocks Christ for the ministry has to try and show what Christ is like by example more than by anything so that people may be drawn to him. The Church says that serious sin if not repented will drag you to Hell forever and venial sin will not for it is not as bad. It is impossible then to see how a cleric sinning in public can commit a venial sin for their sin pillories the person they represent.

The priests are unfit judges and judgementalism could be an attraction. People like feeling superior.