

SEAL OF CONFESSION

The Roman Catholic Church claims that God sanctioned its practice of blackmailing penitents to confess their sins to a priest before the priest forgives their sins. If they have serious sin, they will burn in Hell forever unless they confess. The General Councils of the Church authorised the practice and claimed God protected them from error in doing so.

Accordingly, the infallible Council of Trent decreed, “If anyone denies either that sacramental confession was established or is necessary to salvation, of divine right or says that the way of confessing to a priest in secret alone, which the Church has forever observed from the start, and which it still observes, was not established by Christ or by his command and was established by men then let him be accursed” (Canon 6, On the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance).

Thus, the Catholic who denies the need for confession to a priest one to one at confession is therefore no longer a Catholic. There is no evidence that secret confession to a priest took place in the primitive Church so Trent definitely lied here in saying that the custom was kept from the start. And it was another lie that Christ commanded confession in secret to a priest. The Council was appointed to work out what Tradition was and so it lied for it knew. Even if Christ did give priests the power to forgive sins he said nothing about private confession being necessary at all never mind for salvation. In that decree, we have a clear proof that the Catholic Church made doctrines that couldn't be shown to have existed in the first or second and perhaps part of the third centuries. We have no proof that Rome itself commanded auricular confession to priests and without that command even the later time when this was practiced doesn't mean a thing. It wasn't official. It was only in the second millennium that confession was made so essential and a part of salvation.

Catholics have to confess their individual serious sins as a matter of obligation and are advised to mention the venial ones too though this is not necessary to a priest in confession. The priest then can forgive their sins. The priest has the authority to forgive sins as if he was the God who was offended.

The Vatican has declared in 2019 amid increasing lawmaking that the confessional must not be confidential where child abuse is admitted to by a penitent that such laws violate religious freedom. The Church said it reasoned that a priest can hear a confession of child abuse by a cleric and he can deny under oath that he knows or heard for it for the penitent really confesses only to God. This obscene doctrine is too extreme. The priest can say nothing or refuse to speak. The confessional then is representative and gives rise to perjury. No legal system can tolerate that.

Catholic priests are not allowed to repeat what they heard in confession be it a sin or anything else unless the penitent expressly permits them. This obligation to secrecy is called the seal of confession. The penalty for breaking the seal is excommunication and life-long penance and several other harsh punishments. A priest is expected to choose execution even when his silence means he will be accused of a murder he did not commit. The evil of the sacrament denies that human life is the absolute value. Yet without this principle there can be no real distinction between right and wrong. The confessional is wholly opposed to the morality it pretends to protect.

The Code of Canon Law (Canon 983) declares, “The sacramental seal is inviolable. Accordingly, it is absolutely wrong for a confessor in any way to betray the penitent, for any reason whatsoever, whether by word or in any other fashion.” “The confessor is wholly forbidden to use knowledge acquired in confession to the detriment of the penitent, even when all danger of disclosure is excluded” (Canon 984). See the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2490. “Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to persons, the Church declares that every priest who hears confessions is bound under very severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins that his penitents have confessed to him. He can make no use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents' lives. This secrecy, which admits of no exceptions, is called the ‘sacramental seal’, because what the penitent has made known to the priest remains ‘sealed’ by the sacrament” (1467).

Child-abusing priests aren't punished half as badly as this so breaking the confidence even to save lives is a worse crime than molesting children and stirring up a massive scandal.

The value in such a terrible doctrine as the seal for the Catholic hierarchy is that it imbues in Catholics a sense that morality is obeying the Church not a choice between best and worst for the rule still stands no matter what happens as a result of it. The seal doctrine is evil for it denies that the worst damage should be avoided.

When he can speak out to prevent children from being raped or a person being murdered the priest is still bound to keep his lips sealed tight even when he is sure that he will not be blamed for telling. The priest becomes responsible for any harm that his silence does. Rome maintains that he isn't for telling is the worst evil and it is not the priest's secret to tell for it is

told to God while the priest merely listens in. If so what is the purpose of having the priest listening? So there is no need for the priest. Confession is an evil institution for it is unnecessary and because it is not right to force priests to do evil because of it.

They claim that the fear of being told on would stop people from going to confession. But breaking the seal would only be commendable and lawful in extreme cases. The Church says that if the paedophile is afraid to go to confession in case the priest goes to the police with his revelations, then there is no chance that the paedophile might be told to turn himself in. In fact, the Church teaches that nobody is obligated to turn himself in for any crime. Also, the paedophile can still confess in an area where the priest does not know him. The Church teaches that the priest is not obligated to tell anybody to turn themselves in. This teaching is proof that the doctrine of the seal of confession is a terrible and twisted one.

The Church pretends that the priest cannot reveal what is told to him in confession because the confession is really just made to God and not the priest. The priest can make it his place to tell what he heard by accepting confession as being to him as well as to God. But confession before the priest is a repeat of what has been admitted to God prior to confession. The penitent has to undertake an examination of conscience in preparation for confession and tell God his sins and ask for mercy. When that is done he goes to the priest. The confession before the priest isn't for God at all. The bad people have a right to be stopped by being informed to the police by the confessors and their victims have a right to be protected. The Church of Rome is saying that this is all wrong. The monster's right to have their secrets kept is greater. They matter the most. Anyway, anybody that wants to confess a terrible crime can do so to a priest who does not know him.

The confessional would bring great good if it blackmailed people into admitting crimes to the priest and permitted him to divulge its secrets for the good of society.

I have met Catholics who reasoned: "When a priest is capable of letting child-abuse go on he can do anything evil. He cannot fear the penalties of the Church for it is clear that since they are unjust that they are null and void."

God did not make the rule of the seal for he did not need to and it is inhuman. It is degrading to take part in confession and it is child-abuse to make your children do so for it blesses evil and blackmails people to tell their serious sins or else rot in Hell.

The Church says that the priest has no right to tell what he heard in the confessional or even to speak about it to the person who confessed without that person's consent. The first reason for this, is that the priest would not have heard these things unless the person trusted him. But the Church is lying for it permits you to betray people. For instance, if a friend told you in confidence that they were going to kill somebody she would tell you to go the police. The other so-called reason is that the confession is made to God and the priest is only there as God's instrument so the information is not the priest's to tell. But it is the priest's for God does not wipe his memory after he gives absolution and when he has to have the priest listening. God could make the priest give a sermon that is relevant to the penitent which does not tell the priest what sins the penitent has committed. And God is supposed to have revealed the sins of others to the prophets so that they could expose the sinners to the world.

So, the reason fails to prove that God does not want the information told. The third reason is that if the priest could tell the confession system would be unworkable. But if you really want God's forgiveness you will be willing to confide in a priest even if you can't trust him so that is not a reason.

Ordinary people do not get away with refusing to give vital information legally. The law will not accept the excuse that their conscience forbids it. A Christadelphian who won't tell the police if somebody is going to bomb a train with loads of passengers on it will not get away with it by saying the Bible teaches that governments and their officers, the police, are from the Devil. The Christadelphian believes the Bible forbids any recourse to the law of the land for it is part of Satan's world. Neither should a Catholic priest be allowed to get away. Letting the priests off means there is nowhere rational or unprejudiced to draw the line. The fact that this scenario is possible for a priest is enough to condemn the Roman system as rotten. If I said I was my own religion and that my conscience didn't let me warn the police that a terrorist had left a bomb in it and people die would the Catholic Church respect me for that? No it just respects itself. The damn hypocrisy.

Confession forces the person who is in an accident and who is dying to confess to a gossipy priest. A doctrine that does that to the most vulnerable of people is intolerable.

The priest could break the seal and claim that you gave him permission to do it. There are no witnesses and you are the sinner so he will be the one smelling of roses. A judicial system that has all this secrecy is not a just system. A judicial system needs a fair degree of openness at least. The confessional is alleged to do far more important work than any secular court and yet secular courts have more fairness. Weird.

Should the law of the land criminalise a priest who hears about child-abuse in confession and does not report it to the legal authorities?

Pros:

Counsellors and other professionals who have to observe confidentiality are made to tell and so the Church should not get an exemption.

The fact that a child's wellbeing is more important than a religion or God or Bible or Church law is upheld.

The state must act neutral to religion.

Cons:

The law would not be enforceable for it will only lead to victims and perpetrators refusing to mention the abuse.

(Comment: Even if that is true, what about the principle that the child comes before religion? The law still degrades the child by backing the Church.)

Confession is anonymous. Should the priest run out after the person who mentions sex abuse to see who they are?

(Comment: Not all confession is anonymous.)

Some situations are best not reported. For example, maybe the victim doesn't feel abused but needs somebody to talk to without the danger of it being reported.

(Comment: This is a matter for debate. A child who is abused but who doesn't feel abused would be letting down the children that need somebody to report by embracing such an attitude. And the confessional is certainly encouraging the attitude.)

There is no evidence that the secrecy of the confessional has helped abuse to continue or abusers to get away scot-free.

(Comment: If it is secret there wouldn't be! What about Oliver O Grady a priest who happily confessed his sins of child-molestation time and time again?)

CONCLUSION: Confessing as therapy is fine. But the purpose of the Catholic confessional is the magical forgiveness of sin not therapy. It violates religious freedom by veiled threats against those who do not confess.

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