



Why do Christians desire to confess their sins daily?
What do we hear from God when we confess our sins?
What is *private confession*? When could you use it?

- How is it that we are able to tell someone that their sins are forgiven? Isn't God the only one who can forgive people who have sinned against Him?

1. What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is the special power Christ gave to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

The holy evangelist John writes in chapter 20: "[Jesus] breathed on [His disciples] and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

- Jesus gave this authority to forgive (or not forgive) sins to:

Peter Matthew 16:19 (999)

His Disciples John 20:22-23 (998)

Note: You are a disciple of Jesus too!

All Believers Matthew 18:15-18 (1001)
1 Peter 2:9 (1000)

- Why is it called *The Office of the Keys*?

Because it gives the right to _____ or _____ the doors of heaven.

- **False Teaching (Roman Catholic):** The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Christ gave the keys to Peter as the first pope and to all succeeding popes, and that the power of the keys includes the right to make laws that all Christians must follow.

- False Teaching (Episcopal): Many in the Episcopal Church teach that Christ gave the keys only to the twelve apostles and their successors in office who have been ordained by them directly or indirectly. This is called the teaching of the *Apostolic Succession*.

The "Unlocking" and "Locking" Keys

- When people are sorry for their sins (repentant) and trust in Jesus for forgiveness, you have the authority from Jesus to tell them that their sins are forgiven.

1 John 1:9 (1009)
Psalm 32:5

"Jesus wants us to use the keys to UNLOCK the kingdom of heaven to those who are penitent. To those who are sorry for their sins we announce the forgiveness of sins" (Catechism, p. 179)

- When people are *not sorry* for their sins (impenitent) and do not believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, you have the authority from Jesus to tell them that their sins are not forgiven.

1 John 1:8 (1002)
Romans 2:5 (1003)
John 3:18 (1006)

"Jesus tells His people to LOCK the kingdom of heaven to those who are impenitent by refusing to forgive the sins of those who are not sorry for them" (Catechism, p. 179).

Discussion

- **Situation:** Suppose a church member has been caught stealing something. The pastor visits the person in jail and he says, "I don't think the stealing I did was even wrong. I don't care if I'm forgiven or not. In fact, I would do it again if I weren't stuck in here!" What would you say to that person? Would you use the "locking" key or the "unlocking" key?
- **Analysis:** What are the ways that a Christian can use the "unlocking" key for someone else? (Hint: Think about the *means of grace* that we have covered in other lessons.)



Memory Work

Memorize The Office of the Keys, part one (everything in the box on p. 178 of your catechism)

Assignment

- Memory Work