

A Memory Aid for Confession—Office of the Keys



Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, ...” Luke 11:1

Confession — Office of the Keys

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8–9

What is confession?

Confession has two parts.
First, that we confess our sins,
and second, that we receive absolution,
that is, forgiveness,
from the pastor as from God Himself,
not doubting, but firmly believing
that by it our sins are forgiven
before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins,
even those we are not aware of,
as we do in the Lord's Prayer;
but before the pastor
we should confess only those sins
which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life
according to the Ten Commandments:
Are you a father, mother,
son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker?
Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy?
Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome?
Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds?
Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any
harm?

What is the Office of the Keys?*

The Office of the Keys
is that special authority
which Christ has given to His church on earth
To forgive the sins of repentant sinners,
but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant
as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

This is what St. John the Evanelist writes in chapter twenty: The
Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said,
'Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive anyone his sins,
they are forgiven;
If you do not forgive them,
they are not forgiven'
(John 20:22-23).

What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ
deal with us by His divine command,
In particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from
the Christian congregation
And absolve those who repent of their sins
and want to do better,
this is just as valid and certain,
even in heaven,
as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

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Book Title: [Enchiridion : Der kleine Catechismus für die gemeine Pfarherr vnd Prediger / Mart. Luther](#)

Author: Luther, Martin, 1483-1546

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