

# You Don't Need to Go to Confession?

by Sebastian R Fama

I am absolutely amazed by the disparity in the number of people who go to confession on Saturday and the number of people who receive communion on Sunday. I am certainly not in a position to judge any individual. However, I am pretty sure there are more than a handful of people in the average Catholic Church that have sins to confess.

Whenever the subject comes up in conversation, some people will say: "I don't sin." Unless you are Jesus or Mary, this is an outright falsehood. The apostle John tells us: "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, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

Others will say: "I only commit venial sins, so I don't have to go to confession." That may or may not be true as people are not always aware of what constitutes a serious sin. But even if it is true, we should still confess our venial sins. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: "Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit" (Paragraph 1458). And that is because confession, like all sacraments, produces grace. And it is by grace that God works in and through us.

What people usually mean when they say they do not sin, is that they have not robbed any banks, killed anyone, or done anything that society deems evil. To be sure, such sins are problematic. But they are not the only sins that need confessing. We can get so accustomed to our favorite sins, that we end up thinking of them as normal behavior. Sins like gossiping, using God's name carelessly, missing Sunday Mass and a host of other common sins need to be addressed.

There is something else we need to keep in mind. If we receive communion while in a state of grave sin, we commit another grave sin. As you might expect, this offends our Lord. In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 we read: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself."

If you are not sure what needs to be confessed, get a good examination of conscience like [THIS ONE](#) and be open to what God has to say. Remember, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). And grace is what we need to be the people God wants us to be.

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