

Chapter Fifteen

The Confessional

One of the practices of the Roman Catholic church that deserves attention is that of the confessional. What is the teaching behind it and how does it square with the Word of God? Let's view some primary source teachings to compare with.

The Baltimore Catechism¹

408. What is confession? Confession is the telling of our sins to an **authorized** priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

The Catholic Catechism

1456. Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance.

In the Roman church, it is taught that the priest has the power to forgive all sins committed after baptism. This forgiveness takes the form of absolution by the priest after the penitent privately confesses his or her sins before the priest.

When did such a practice begin? It was not until the year 1215 CE, under Pope Innocent III, that such private confessions were required.

A Biblical response to this practice:

- Mark 2:7 says, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
- Acts 8:22 says, “Repent therefore of this, your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” Peter did not hear the man's confession and forgive him.
- 1 John 1:7-9 states, “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua the Messiah his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We confess our sins to God, not to a priest.
- 1 John 2:1,2 says, “My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Yeshua the Messiah, the righteous. And he is the atoning sacrifice for

our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”

Our Counselor, our Advocate is the Messiah Himself, not a mere sinful, mortal man like ourselves.

1. A Catechism is a religious teaching system using questions and answers.