

During the season of Lent the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is emphasized as a thing to do. Why? Right from our Catholic Catechism #1423 *“It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.”* Lent is a time of conversion, that is, giving up your sins and coming more fully into the grace of God. Our Church teaches for any serious sin, the person is **obliged** to confess at least once per year. (CC # 1457)

Now, some people have not gone to Confession in many years, and there are a bunch of reasons why they don't. One is: he or she is embarrassed of the sin. Some think that they are *original* in their particular sin—that no one in the history of humankind has sinned in the way they have. The truth is: there is a very limited way we can sin. There are only Ten Commandments—therefore, basically only ten ways to sin. So, no one sinner could be too original. To even think in such a way would be a sin of pride! The fact is: If you have done it, so have millions of others.

Another reason why some do not go to Confession is that they feel they are not big sinners. They compared themselves to others saying, “I haven't killed anyone.” When it comes to sin and forgiveness, however, we must not compare ourselves to others. The fact is: you have a personal relationship with God. Your sin is a personal offense in your relationship with God.

Here's an example: If two brothers deeply hurt their mother by their own personal decisions, one cannot correctly reason “I don't have to admit I was wrong and say I'm sorry to Mom, because my brother hurt her even more.” Each son has a personal relationship with his mother. In our relationship with God our sin is an offense in our relationship with Him, and it needs to be addressed for our relationship to grow. Besides, there are several ways to “kill” someone. We could do it through words, attitudes, prejudice, envy, dishonesty and more.

A third reason why some do not go to Confession is: they question “Why do I have to go to a priest? Why can't I just confess to God?” By all means, confess your sins to God, but ...

Jesus came “in the flesh” to forgive sins and renew life. He could have forgiven sins and redeemed the world without ever leaving his throne in heaven, but he came to us personally “in the flesh” so we could hear the words “You are forgiven.” And, there is a human need for us to “put it on the lips,” that is, to admit our offense and our sorrow to another human person. For proof of this, just look to the very successful Twelve Step Program of Alcohol Anonymous. Before any healing can happen Step #5 says, “I must admit to God, to myself and **to another human being** the exact nature of my wrongs.”

Also, Jesus gave Peter and the Church the “Keys of Heaven” when our Lord said, *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* (Mt.16:19)—thus the power of absolution.

Any more reasons why not to go to Confession? There probably are, but these three don't have too much weight to them.