

1. **The problem of confessing the sins of others.** The essential concept of **repentance and reparation** is that the person responsible for the sin needs to make amends for the damage that has been done. There is a sense in which it is improper for a third party to say, "I'm sorry for what that person did to you." Nevertheless, it is important to *recognize and condemn evil wherever it exists* so that it is clear where the Church stands.

- Galileo Affair.
- Witch hunts.
- Spanish Inquisition and Wars of Religion--torturing and killing heretics.
- Jesuit ownership of slaves in the U.S.
- Persecution of the Jews.
- Sins of priests & bishops (local and national scandals).

2. **The problem of forgiving others' sins.** It seems unfair for a third party to declare that the offender's sins are forgiven. In the natural order, *only the victim* has the right and the power to say, "I forgive you for the evil that you have done to me." *In order to prevent the chaos that comes from blood feuds, society has intervened and taken over management of some personal conflicts through the criminal and civil courts.*

3. **Judge Jesus' Bankruptcy Court.** God has declared that all of us are bankrupt; He has seized control of *all human debts to each other*: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; all are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God offered as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith" (Rom 3:23-25). "**Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more**" (Rom 5:20). "**All is grace**" (a slogan in Christian spirituality).

Under the terms of the **New Covenant** (contract, bargain, agreement, committed personal relationship), we may no longer take revenge on others for the **real evil** they have done to us. They are God's problem, not ours. "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, '**Vengeance is mine, I [God!] will repay, says the Lord**' [Dt 32:35]. No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:19-21).

God will ensure **just judgment** and **just punishment** for sin (*doctrines of Hell and Purgatory*). But He also guarantees that anyone who wants to repent of sin and accept the gift of Heaven may do so.

4. **The sacramental system:** Jesus uses human instruments "to complete his work on earth." Examples: musical instruments; pen and pencil; carpenter's tools; internet.

<p><b>Catholic Theory</b></p>	<p><i>ex opere operato</i>: "from the work <i>having been worked</i>"</p> <p>Infallible source of grace.</p> <p>Direct and personal relationship with God--no human intermediaries.</p>
<p><b>Protestant Theory</b></p>	<p><i>ex opere operantis</i>: "from the <i>person</i> working the work"</p> <p>Trickle-down theory: Garbage in, garbage out (GIGO).</p> <p>Results measured by emotions--"<i>feel-good Christianity</i>."</p>

5. "**Outward sign of an inward reality. A sign that causes what it signifies.**"

- A. Baptism: *permanent* cleansing from Original Sin (*innocent sin!*).
- B. Confirmation: consummation of gift of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Eucharist: intimate union with Jesus, whole and entire (**transubstantiation**).
- D. Reconciliation: cleansing from personal sin ("70 times 7 forgiveness"--Mt 18:21-22).
- E. Ordination (bishops, priests, deacons)--"Only men need apply"--Jesus continues His ministry on earth.
- F. Marriage: vows and consummation.
- G. Anointing of the Sick: prayer for healing and restoration.

6. **The Judas Factor:** *Jesus has been betrayed in every age by those whom He has chosen to represent Him.* The sins of priests are as old as Christianity itself. Lord, have mercy on us!