

What are Mortal or Venial Sins?

Definition of Sin: Sin is an offense against reason, truth and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods (refer to Catholic Catechism page 453, Para. 1849). Sin is a direct violation and rejection of God's charity and mercy. Sin takes us away from communion with God and communion with the church. Only God forgives sins, and we read this in Sacred Scripture, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (St. Mark 2:7) and "Your sins are forgiven" (St. Mark 2:5, 10 and St. Luke 7:48). Yet by divine authority, Jesus gave this power to men to exercise in His holy name (St. John 20:21-23), so this holy Sacrament was instituted by Jesus, who parted this authority to his Apostles, our modern day Catholic Priests.

Now venial sins are not as serious as mortal or capital sins, but venial sins entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures or items, an example might be when we use curse words. These sins offend the Lord, but does not completely remove us from communion with the God. Mortal sins, however, completely removes God's sanctifying grace from our souls, until the mortal sin is repented for as Jesus Christ instructed us to do in many passages of the Holy Bible. Mortal sins can send a soul to eternal damnation, if the person who committed such, does not repent prior to death, making peace with God over his/her sinful life. Mortal sins, such as murder in all its forms: abortion or killing another human being, will prevent us from obtaining the grace necessary to be received into God's holy kingdom. This is clearly spoken of in the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not kill" (see Exodus 20:13).

All sins committed must be repented for in one's heart and all have a two-fold effect the pain the sin causes others (the Body of Christ) and a debt that is associated to that particular sin, as instituted by God's divine mercy. Every single sin must be repented for and must be repaid to the justice of God. With Mortal Sins, in order to enter into heaven one must repent for the capital sin committed and must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession); and for all sins, purification of these previously repented sins (meaning after receiving absolution by a Priest) will still have a payment of debt (called Temporal Punishment) which must take place either on earth or after death in Purgatory.